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THE KING

AND

THE KINGDOM.



# THE KING

AND

# THE KINGDOM:

*A STUDY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.*

‘To the present age is ascribed productiveness and changeableness of opinions, and at the same time indifference to opinions. But that cannot arise from this : no man in all corrupted Europe can be indifferent to truth as such, for it, in the last resort, decides upon his life ; but every one is at last become cold and shy towards the erring teachers and preachers of truth. Take the hardest heart and brain which withers away in any capital city, and only give him the certainty that the spirit which approaches him brings down from eternity the key which opens and shuts the so weighty gates of his life-prison, of death, and of heaven,—and the dried-up worldly man, so long as he has a care or a wish, must seek for a truth which can reveal to him that spirit.’—RICHTER’S *Levana*.

‘Hasten the time when, unfettered by sectarian intolerance, and unawed by the authority of men, the Bible shall make its rightful impression upon all ; the simple and obedient readers thereof calling no man Master, but Christ only.’—Dr. CHALMERS.

‘I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say.’—1 Cor. x. 15.

FIRST SERIES.

NEW YORK : G. P. PUTNAM’S SONS.  
LONDON : WILLIAMS AND NORGATE.

1893.



## PREFACE.

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MANY thoughtful and honest minds cannot but feel that under the pressure of a systematised theology the gospel of Christ has lost much of its freshness and power. The very reverence paid outwardly to Scripture has tended towards this result. By every generation, throughout eighteen centuries, the divine Truth has been expounded, weighed, measured, attacked, defended. This ceaseless handling could scarcely fail to soil and dim its native brightness. The atmosphere of Christian thought, necessary and life-giving though it be, is always more or less weighted with foreign particles, emanations of the human mind, which have settled into a thick film of dogmatic teaching, blurring in no small degree the truth which lies beneath. There is surely no irreverence in the touch which would brush away these accretions of centuries.

Probably they whose profession it is to preach the gospel are of all men least likely, in the ordinary course of theological study, to accept it in its simplicity. This involves no disparagement of their learning or sincerity. It arises from the fact that they are bound down to creeds and articles of religion, and that their minds have been nourished and developed by the ideas of spiritual fathers and doctors of the Church. So it comes to pass that their interpretations of Scripture are tinged unconsciously with traditional beliefs. Their expositions of the New Testament have a definiteness which did not exist in the teaching of Jesus, and almost every parable he spoke has had impressed upon it some settled, orthodox meaning.

There is indeed much in the present aspect of Christianity to occasion sorrow and perplexity. On the one side are clashing creeds and sects, seeming but to rend and disfigure the

Truth at which they clutch ; on the other side is a band of honest, fearless sceptics, acute in the exercise of criticism, and so self-confident that they scruple not to adopt unhesitatingly the conclusions of their own minds, to the utter rejection of whatever appears miraculous in the gospel narratives. Yet surely the compilers, who wrote in apostolic times, were not destitute of common sense and powers of judgment, and they must have had infinitely better means of arriving at the facts than can be claimed by any investigator after the lapse of eighteen centuries.

Disregarding alike dogmatic interpretations and hostile criticisms, it is no small comfort to turn to the narratives themselves, seeking with patient study their true import. Independent and unprejudiced enquiry is the best preservative against the two extremes of believing too easily or doubting too much. To do full justice to the authors of the Gospels we must take their work as it were fresh from their own hands. If the gospel histories are worth anything, they will be self-luminous, and by their own light alone should they be interpreted. If in the main points and circumstances they are held to be not reliable, they can scarcely be deemed worthy of serious study.

In this spirit the following investigation has been conducted. Everything is sought to be taken as it stands, without abatement and without addition, the simple object being to arrive at the facts intended to be conveyed by the evangelists, and to grasp the truths and doctrines taught by Jesus.

Not scholarship, as may easily be seen, but only earnestness of thought and sincerity of purpose, can be urged in favour of this work. It is the outcome of many years of painstaking, loving labour, the foundation having previously been laid by a similar methodical and careful review of each of the four gospels separately. Not until that apprenticeship to the subject was ended, did the author venture to undertake the more important task of combining the four narratives, pondering them as before verse by verse, phrase by phrase, and when necessary word by word. No preconceived ideas, his own or

of others, were voluntarily allowed to influence the investigation; no theories or doctrines had to be upheld, no reasonable conclusions needed to be shrunk from or evaded, no fear of adverse judgment or criticism, no dread of blame, no hope of praise or profit have been at work to interfere with the expression of free and honest thought. That fact may serve, it is hoped, to extenuate any apparently undue boldness of utterance: if the writer seems, as may often be the case, to undervalue the opinions of other men, it is not out of disrespect, but simply because truth is to be prized above everything; whenever the conclusions arrived at are strongly stated, it is because they have been as strongly felt. A careful reader will note the gradual growth of opinion from first to last. The true nature of Christ's gospel, of the kingdom of heaven, and of real discipleship to Jesus, must needs dawn more and more, here a little and there a little, on the mind which sets itself to the study of his divine teaching.

All Scriptural quotations are from the Revised Version, unless otherwise stated.

Frequent references will be found to the following works :

THE HOLY BIBLE. Literally and idiomatically translated out of the original languages. By Robert Young, D.D. A. Fullarton & Co., Edinburgh, Dublin and London.

THE NEW TESTAMENT. With various readings from the most celebrated manuscripts of the original Greek Text. By Constantine Tischendorf. Tauchnitz Edition. Volume 1000. Sampson Low, Son & Marston, London.

THE NEW TESTAMENT. Translated from the critical text of Von Tischendorf. By Samuel Davidson, D.D. Henry King & Son, London. (*All readings and renderings mentioned as being those of Von Tischendorf are from this work, the renderings, of course, being by Dr. Davidson.*)

THE NEW TESTAMENT FOR ENGLISH READERS. By Henry Alford, D.D. Rivingtons, London.

THE HOLY BIBLE. Translated by Samuel Sharpe. Williams & Norgate, London.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, together with an inter-linear Translation. S. Bagster & Sons, Limited, London.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S CONCORDANCE OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT. S. Bagster & Sons, Limited, London.



# THE KING AND THE KINGDOM:

## A STUDY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

### PART I.

THE opening sentences of John's narrative carry back our minds into the unfathomable abysses of the past. His words are bold, mysterious, yet positive. Inasmuch as he gives no special definition of them, we are bound to accept them in their natural sense. When the term 'logos,' 'word,' was used previously by philosophical teachers, they chose it as the best adapted to convey their meaning. When John chose the same term, it was for the same purpose. His use of it could not be meant to bind him or us to any previous system of belief.

'In the beginning was the Word.' The translators have used a capital letter in 'word,' thereby introducing the idea of a personality. That may be the true sense; if so, it will dawn upon us as we proceed. Let us not anticipate the writer's meaning, but be careful only to seek out the reality intended by him to attach to every term he used.

The context (verse 3) makes it evident that the allusion is to the 'beginning' of creation. When things sprang into being, it was not without a 'word,' a speech, the utterance of a will. 'In the beginning was the word.' And that will, or fiat, emanated from God: 'and the Word was with God.' This term 'God' necessarily signifies a person; but it involves much more than that; and it will be well, at the outset of this inquiry, to fix in our minds the original and true significance of the term 'God.' Much confusion of thought, and not a little error, have sprung from the restriction of our conception of God to the idea of his personality. Regarding him in that way, and as the supreme person in the universe, we assume that the term 'God' is applicable to Him alone. That is very far from the Jewish notion, and from the old, scriptural definitions of the word 'God.' In the Old Testament there are two passages in which the term 'god' is applied to men. 'And the Lord (literally Jehovah) said unto Moses, <sup>7 Ex. 1</sup> Sec, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.' 'I said, Ye are gods, and <sup>82 Psa. 6</sup> all of you sons of the Most High.' The following passages bring God into comparison with, and denote his supremacy over other gods. 'I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord (literally, Jehovah), God <sup>14 Gen. 22</sup> Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.' 'The King shall do ac- <sup>11 Dan. 35</sup> cording to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God

3 Dan. 26  
136 Psa. 2, 3  
95 Psa. 3  
82 Psa. 1

of gods.' 'Ye servants of the Most High God.' 'Give thanks unto the God of gods. . . . Give thanks unto the Lord of lords.' 'The Lord (literally, Jehovah) is a great God, and a great King above all gods.' 'God standeth in the congregation of God; He judgeth among the gods.' The mention of false gods is, by itself, sufficient evidence of the meaning of the term God: either they were mere idols, having no existence, or they were powerless before the supreme God. The words of the apostle Paul are in harmony with the above. 'We know that no idol is *anything* in the world, and that there is no God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and our Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.' Many gods, many lords, many fathers,—but to us, looking to the highest, one God, one Lord, one Father.

81 Cor. 5, 6

It is obvious, therefore, that the true idea of the term 'God' is equivalent to the word 'Ruler:' the supreme God is God of gods, King of kings, Lord of lords, the most high God.

1 John 1

We are now in a position to understand the next sentence. 'And the Word was God.' That word, speech, will, fiat, was itself creative, regulative: the word cannot be separated from the speaker, nor the will from the person, nor the will in action—the fiat—from the Creator.

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But the evangelist means more than this. His mode of expression now indicates that the term 'word' denotes a person. 'The same was in the beginning with God.' In the literal and idiomatic translation of the Bible by Dr. Robert Young the passage stands: 'This one was in the beginning with God.'

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We are now in possession of the idea of two Persons, to each of whom the term 'God' is applicable. The next sentence indicates that the 'beginning' of a creation is alluded to. 'All things were made by (or, through) him.' In the French and German versions the translators were able to indicate by the gender that 'him' designates 'the Word.' The English version does not bring this out, but that it is the meaning is clear, not only from the preceding sentence, but also from the repetition of the fact that 'the world was made through him,' in verse 10. Therefore the statement of the evangelist amounts to this: God made all things through Another.

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This fact is emphasised: 'and without him was not anything (Young renders literally, 'not even one thing') made that hath been made.' Not merely dead matter. In him who is called 'the Word' there existed a vivifying principle: 'In him was life.' And that life is the origin of human intelligence: 'and the life was the light of men.' And the office of light is to shine; and the sphere of its influence is darkness. 'And the light shineth in the darkness.' And between light and darkness there can be no communion; they are mutually antagonistic; the darkness vanishes before a light the power and nature of which it can neither resist nor comprehend, 'and the darkness apprehended (or, overcame) it not.'

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The result, thus far, of our investigation, based upon the natural and ordinary meaning of the words, could scarcely be better summarised than in the following synopsis by Dean Alford of the philo-

sophic theology of Philo, who flourished in the first century of the christian era. 'He identifies the Word with the wisdom of God; . . . it is the image of God; the archetype and pattern of light; but itself like none of created things; the eldest of begotten things; the eldest son of the Father of all that are; the shadow of God, using whom as an instrument He made the world; through whom the world was constituted; the viceroy of God; he contains and hath fulfilled all things; the second God, which is His Word.'

These doctrines are very high and mysterious. Whence did the evangelist derive them? If he simply imbibed them from the Jewish Alexandrine philosophy, which 'must be referred to the mixture of the Jewish religious element with the speculative philosophies of the Greeks, more especially with that of Plato, and with ideas acquired during the captivity from Oriental sources' (Alford), then his borrowed speculations will claim small hold upon our faith. Or if these solemn and seemingly authoritative expressions of John arose simply from the workings of his own intellect, he did thereby but throw another pebble into the unfathomable sea of mystery which covers the origin of all things, and his ideas are worth no more to us than other ripples raised from time to time upon its surface. No: if his gospel is to influence our faith, hope, life, we must feel sure as to the authority upon which he rests it: and in pondering his narrative we shall stand upon the watch for any indications it may give with respect to this.

One idea let us discard at the outset: that of plenary inspiration. This evangelist did not claim it. It is the height of presumption to assert that any writer possessed a supernatural power of arriving at truth and escaping error, when the writer himself makes no such pretensions. The oft-quoted text, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God,' has no bearing upon our present investigation; for whatever may be its significance with respect to the older Jewish Scriptures, it is evident that the apostle when writing to Timothy could not have had in mind any portion of the then uncompiled New Testament. Besides which, the Revised Version gives a new sense to that passage: 'Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable.' 3 2 Tim. 16

The opening of Luke's narrative is in strong contrast to that of John. Instead of mystery, we have simplicity; instead of doctrines beyond human reach, we are told about historical facts; the origin of the narrative is stated, and the mode of its compilation.

Many persons previously had undertaken the task of preparing a record of certain fully-established facts. Those facts had been originally delivered by eye-witnesses, who also had held a special office in imparting the teaching connected therewith. 'Forasmuch as 1 Luke 1, 2 many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled (or, fully established) among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word. . . . ' Luke thought it desirable to undertake the same work. He had investigated the matters accurately, step by step, from the commencement, and he proposed to write them, in due order, to his noble friend Theophilus: 'it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things

1 Luke 1

accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus.' His object in doing this was to furnish Theophilus with an assured basis for his belief in that verbal instruction which had been given to him: 'that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things (Gr., words) wherein thou wast instructed (or, which thou wast taught by word of mouth).'

In this introduction Luke is anxious to give a firm footing for our faith. On his care as an investigator, and on his qualifications for the task, he would have us base our confidence in the narrative. Again we find no claim to Inspiration. Surely both Luke and Theophilus would have scouted such an idea, although theologians have not scrupled to impose it upon themselves and others, and have extended their theory of inspiration (based upon one or two passages misread or misapplied) to everything they found bound up in the sacred volume.

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The opening indicates the painstaking way in which the narrative was compiled. The author tells in whose reign the event happened, the name of the priest to whom it happened, the course to which he belonged, the name of his wife, her descent, and the reputation in which they were held. 'There was in the days of Herod, King of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' This pious couple were childless, and were of an age which forbade the hope of offspring. 'And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they were both now well stricken in years.'

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In the performance of his priestly functions, Zacharias had entered into the inner sanctuary to burn incense, leaving the congregation outside engaged in prayer. 'Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple (or, sanctuary) and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense.' Suddenly he found that he was not alone. On the right hand of the altar there stood a supernatural Being! 'And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.' The word translated 'angel' signifies 'messenger,' and is constantly so rendered in Dr. Young's literal version.

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The vision of this august and mysterious personage troubled and terrified the beholder. 'And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.' The angel bade him dismiss all fear; told him that his prayer was heard; that his wife should bear a son; and that the father must name him John, *i.e.* 'God is favourable' (Alford). 'But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.' Not only would the father's heart overflow with joy, but many would have cause to bless the advent of the child. 'And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.' He would prove no common man, but a hero in God's sight; he would touch no alcohol in any form; and from the moment of his birth he would be replenished



with a holy spiritual energy. 'For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost (or, Holy Spirit) even from his mother's womb.' The Greek word 'for strong drink' is 'sikera,' 'any strong liquor not made from grapes' (Alford). 1 Luke 15

His work would be that of a religious reformer, and would influence the faith of many of his countrymen. 'And many of the children of Israel shall be turned unto the Lord their God.' A manifestation of God was about to be made, and the predicted child would, in the spirit and power of that prophet who by his prayer drew down fire from heaven and turned the hearts of the idolatrous Israelites, herald the coming of God. 'And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah.' As to this, the super-human speaker quoted a prophecy, which was doubtless familiar to the Jewish priest: 'To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.' The original passage is as follows: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to (or, with) the children, and the heart of the children to (or, with) their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth (or, land) with a curse (or, ban).' Dr. Young's literal rendering is as follows: 16

'Lo, I send to you Elijah the prophet,  
Before the coming of the day of the Lord,  
The great and the fearful.  
And he hath turned back  
The heart of fathers to children,  
And the heart of children to their fathers,  
Before I come and have utterly smitten the land.'

The last line seems to contain a prophecy of the approaching desolation of Judea, which the Authorised and Revised Versions do not indicate.

Zacharias listened in awe-struck silence, but not with implicit confidence. The speaker might be convinced of it all, but how should he become so? 'And Zacharias said unto the angel, whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years (Gr. advanced in her days).' Here we find Young's translation agrees with the marginal rendering of the Revised Version, as regards the last four words. The rendering 'well stricken in years' appears to have been retained for the sake of altering as little as possible the wording to which readers have become accustomed during so many generations. Dr. Young in translating is always bold enough to be accurate, regardless of any considerations of expediency: no small recommendation this, in the eyes of students. 1 Luke 18

The prophecy of the angel extended over a considerable period. Zacharias may have felt that he could scarcely hope to live until a child should have been born, have grown up, have assumed the office of a reformer, and have accomplished so great a work. And to make the matter still more doubtful, it was against the course of nature that his aged wife should become a mother. But his incredulity was met by a very solemn and majestic answer. 'And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings.' 19

Young's version brings out a word which is here missed : 'I am Gabriel, who am standing near in the presence of God.' Von Tischendorf renders, 'that stand by in the presence of God.' The word 'Gabriel' means 'man of God' (Alford).

1 Luke 20

In answer to the priest's, 'Whereby shall I know this?' the angel said, 'And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.' That meant, at the least, a long period of dumbness.

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The time occupied in the delivery of the angel's message so far exceeded that during which it was customary for the priest to remain within the sanctuary, that the worshippers outside had begun to wonder at the delay. 'And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled while he tarried in the temple.' When he appeared, their wonder was not lessened; for being unable to speak he could only attempt by gestures to give them some explanation, from which they inferred that something extraordinary had appeared to him. 'And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: and he continued making signs unto them, and remained dumb.' Alford explains that the strict meaning of the word used in the original includes deafness, and it is obvious from verse 62 that Zacharias was both deaf and dumb.

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When the week during which his course was on duty (Alford) had ended, the priest returned home. 'And it came to pass when the days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed unto his own house.' Subsequently the angel's prediction was verified. 'And

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after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived.' So unexpected an event appeared to her miraculous, a special divine interposition in her favour. For five months together she sought retirement.

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'And she hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men.'

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The evangelist now proceeds to relate another supernatural manifestation. The particulars had evidently been collected with care. The event happened six months after the former one. The place was Nazareth, in Galilee. The person interested was a woman named Mary, unmarried, but betrothed to a man named Joseph, a descendant of the house of David. 'Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.' 'Was sent from God,' the evangelist says: that is his way of putting the matter, it being a necessary inference from verse 19. What really happened was as follows. The angel Gabriel entered into her house, and presented himself before her with a salutation which denoted the utmost respect and congratulation. 'And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee.' The authorized version adds, 'Blessed art thou among women,' which is omitted by the Revisers, not being in the Sinaitic or Vatican MSS. On the same authority the opening words of the next verse are omitted, 'when she saw him,' so that there is now no hint

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of any terror in the mind of Mary at the sight of the angel, as was the case with Zacharias. But the words and manner in which she was addressed troubled and perplexed her greatly. What could it possibly signify? she asked herself. 'But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be.' What could be the work or office to which she was called, needing the assurance, 'The Lord is with thee?'

The messenger hastened to tell her that it was nothing to be dreaded, but a special mark of God's favour towards her. 'And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.' She was to become the mother of a son, whom she was to name 'Jesus,' the same name as Joshua, the former leader of Israel. Philo says, 'Jesus is, being interpreted, the salvation of the Lord' (Alford). 'And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.' A grand and glorious destiny would be his. He would be great, recognized as Son of the Highest; and the supreme God would bestow upon him the royalty of his father David, and he would be ruler of the Israelites ceaselessly and permanently. The expressions used are not applicable to any mortal potentate. 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Gr. unto the ages); and of his kingdom there shall be no end.'

Wrapped in wonder at the message, Mary ventured to ask how it should be accomplished, she being as yet unmarried. 'And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' Her child, she was told, would have no earthly father: a spiritual influence would be upon her; the power of the Highest would overshadow her, like a bird or a cloud from above; and therefore her child would be distinguished from and above all others,—holy,—God's Son. 'And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.'

The angel went on to tell her of another marvel which had been accomplished. One of her own relatives, too old to have had the hope of offspring, was about to become a mother. 'And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren.' Whatever God commanded would be done. 'For no word from God shall be void of power.'

It was an astounding message; but Mary was convinced by the angel's words, and in reverential submissiveness expressed her acquiescence. 'And Mary said, Behold the handmaid (Gr. bondmaid) of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.'

Thereupon the angel quitted her. The words used to describe his entrance and departure denote a reality, not a dream or a vision. 'And the angel departed from her.'

There can be no question as to the sincerity of Luke's belief in the events he has related. The narrative up to this point is indeed marvellous, but there is about it an air of simple, sublime truthfulness.

ness. Unless we are prepared to treat it as a mere fairy tale, various inferences arise from it which have an important bearing on our faith and hopes. If the narrative were assumed to have been untrue, it must have been drawn up, not for purposes of amusement, but of deception. But accepting it as true, we deduce from it the following conclusions :—

1. There are in existence, besides ourselves and the creatures we see and know living with us on the earth, other Beings, endowed with various attributes possessed by ourselves, and of loftier intelligence and power.

2. They are able to manifest themselves visibly to mankind.

3. They have the power of communicating to us their ideas in human language.

4. They have means of passing from place to place.

5. They have an accurate knowledge with respect to earthly localities, and to the dwellers upon earth ; and they are cognizant of events which happen here.

6. They acknowledge and serve one supreme Being, the Most High.

7. He possesses transcendent if not illimitable power, so that no word from Him is without effect.

8. He and the messengers who serve him, take an interest in human affairs, and intervene in them for the benefit of mankind.

9. These Higher Powers have a knowledge of futurity, and of the direction which human history will take under their guidance.

10. They are able to act upon the bodies and souls of men, in ways to us incomprehensible : as upon Zacharias, Elisabeth, and Mary.

Upon these foundations the Gospel narrative of Luke is based.

With respect to verse 32 : ‘The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David,’ Dean Alford observed : ‘Joseph was of the direct lineage of David. That Mary was so, is nowhere expressed in the Gospels, but seems to be implied in verse 32, and has been the general belief of Christians. The Son of David was to be the fruit of *his body* (Ps. cxxxii. 11) ; which He would not be, unless the virgin mother was of the house of David. Still, we must remember the absolute oneness in the marriage relation, which might occasion that Mary herself should be reckoned as being in very deed that which her husband was. Perhaps this has been hardly enough taken into account.’ From the introduction by Luke of the fact (verse 27) that Joseph was ‘of the house of David,’ it is obvious that this matter was not overlooked by the evangelist, and almost equally obvious that he had been unable to trace Mary’s descent from David. Was it the custom to preserve the genealogies of females ?

In verse 35 the word ‘holy’ occurs twice. It is important to bear always in mind the true meaning of that word, which has been much lost sight of by theologians and others. Let us take various passages in which it occurs. ‘The place whereon thou standest is holy ground.’ ‘A solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto the Lord.’ ‘Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.’ ‘The holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts.’



‘Thou shalt make it an holy anointing oil.’ ‘The holy crown.’ ‘The holy linen coat.’ ‘The holy garments.’ . . . ‘The holy sanctuary.’ ‘All the tithe of the land . . . is the Lord’s ; it is holy unto the Lord.’ ‘Holy water.’ ‘His holy heaven.’ ‘Thy holy oracle.’ ‘His holy hill.’ . . . The Lord our God is holy.’ ‘The holy mountain.’ ‘Thy holy cities.’ ‘Our holy and our beautiful house.’ ‘The holy chambers.’ ‘They profaned mine holy things : they have put no difference between the holy and the common.’ ‘The holy covenant.’ ‘Holy flesh.’

30 Ex. 25  
8 Lev. 9  
16 Lev. 4  
27 Lev. 33  
5 Num. 17  
20 Psa. 6  
28 Psa. 2  
99 Psa. 9  
27 Isa. 13  
64 Isa. 10  
44 Eze. 19  
22 Eze. 26  
11 Dan. 28  
2 Hag. 12

These passages make it evident that the sense of ‘holy’ is ‘separate ;’ the word is applied to anything and everything which is set apart, or devoted, to other than common uses, and especially in connection with the service of God. The idea of moral purity is not bound up with the term, although of course an intelligent being could not be ‘holy’ without moral purity.

Interpreting the term ‘holy’ according to its use and signification in the Scriptures, it is evident that the ‘Holy Spirit’ denotes the Spirit specially devoted to the service of God, and that the application of the word ‘holy’ to the promised child Jesus (verse 35) is to be understood in the same way.

The next fact related by Luke is the meeting of Mary and Elisabeth. After what had been told her by the angel, it was natural that Mary should hasten to visit her relative. The evangelist ascertained that the journey made with that object was to some part of the hill country of Judea, but he seems not to have known the name of the town. There Mary sought the house of Zacharias, and greeted Elisabeth. ‘And Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah ; and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth.’

1 Luke 39, 40

When the voice of Mary reached the ears of Elisabeth, the unborn child was startled into life and motion. ‘And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb.’ In the Sinaitic MS., which is the oldest, and is believed to have belonged to the fourth century, the words (corresponding with verse 44) ‘for joy’ are added, but they had been erased by a later hand. We find, in Von Tischendorf’s Tauchnitz edition of the New Testament, many similar instances, showing the liability to error in copying, and a scrupulous care in correcting the old MSS.

„ 41

At the same time, Elisabeth became the subject of a divine spiritual influence, which led her to hail Mary with a shout of welcome, and to utter a few words of joyful eulogy, which have been preserved. ‘And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost ; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me ? For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed (happy—Young) is she that believed ; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.’

„ 42-45

This shows on the part of Elisabeth :

1. A knowledge of the message which had been conveyed to Mary.

2. A feeling of reverence towards both her and the child she would bring forth.
3. And a conviction of the mysterious connection between him and her own as yet unborn child.

How came Elisabeth by this knowledge? Dean Alford says: 'No intimation had been made to her of the situation of Mary.' How can such an assertion be maintained? There is no reason to suppose that the visit was unexpected. It would be most natural that Mary, intending to go to her kinswoman's house, would first lead her to expect her coming, and the marvellous news she had to tell would probably be conveyed by writing at the same time. Surely there is enough of the miraculous and supernatural in the narrative, without our suggesting anything of that kind in addition to what is found there. Zacharias, in spite of his dumbness, would find means to inform his wife of his vision; and it is unnatural to suppose that the two women would have failed to disclose to one another all that related to a subject so intensely interesting to both of them.

This detracts not in any way from the statement that Elisabeth's greeting was inspired. The importance attached at the time to her words was doubtless the reason of their being treasured up and handed down.

The same remark applies to the song of solemn thanksgiving which Luke tells us was uttered by Mary. Because it is introduced here, immediately after that of Elisabeth, we are not to assume that it was spoken then, on the spur of the moment, without premeditation. It is a composition full of moral and poetical beauty, and rises to the utmost height of religious fervour. A finer, nobler chant there could not be. It rises to the level of the unparalleled circumstances to which it relates. Mary adores the Lord, expresses her joy in God, admires the divine condescension, humbles herself before the Supreme Will, forecasts her happy, world-wide renown, and recounts the dispensations of an overruling and retributive Providence.

Luke 46-55

'And Mary said,

My soul doth magnify the Lord,

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaiden (Gr. bondmaiden):

For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed (happy—Young).

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;

And holy is his name.

And his mercy is unto generations and generations

On them that fear him.

He hath shewed strength with his arm;

He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.

He hath put down princes from their thrones.

And hath exalted them of low degree.

The hungry he hath filled with good things;

And the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath holpen (laid hold of—Young) Israel his servant,

That he might remember mercy

(As he spake unto our fathers)

Toward Abraham and his seed for ever.'

Mary remained with Elisabeth about three months. How full of strange interest must have been that visit! The aged matron, expecting her promised child, and the virgin shortly to become a mother, both of them pondering continually on the marvels of the divine power, providence and purposes! The meeting, the stay, the departure, have never had a parallel in human experience. 'And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned unto her house.' 1 Luke 56

Some three months later Elisabeth's child was born. 'Now Elisabeth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.' The news was spread, and friendly congratulations poured in. 'And her neighbours and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy toward her; and they rejoiced with her.' They came to the ceremony of circumcision, and assumed, as a matter of course, that the boy would bear his father's name. 'And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.' But the mother interposed. His name must be John—God is favourable. A good name, truly; but it was not a family one. 'And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.' It is evident from this that the vision of Zacharias had not been mentioned to them. Then, to settle the question, they appealed to the father. The only way in which they could do so was by signs: or rather, that was a readier way than by writing, and sufficient for the purpose. But he could not reply by a mere gesture of assent or dissent; so he signified a wish for writing materials, and to their amazement wrote, not the name only, but the fact that the name John had been already given to the child. 'And they made signs to his father, what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.' 57  
58  
59  
60, 61  
62, 63

The fulfilment of the angel's prediction being now complete, Zacharias was able to use his lips and tongue, and poured forth a thanksgiving to God. 'And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, blessing God.' 64

The circumstances themselves, apart from any explanation, were sufficient to excite astonishment. An honoured priest returns from his ministrations in Jerusalem—dumb; his aged wife becomes a mother; she insists on giving to her child a name which seemed prophetic of some manifestation of divine favour; her husband solemnly ratifies her decision; as soon as that is done, the terrible affliction which had so mysteriously stricken him during many months, is as mysteriously removed; and the first use to which he puts his recovered speech is to bless God for this startling dispensation of His providence! No wonder, then, that a feeling of awe should have come over those who saw and heard such things: the report of them spread in all the neighbourhood. 'And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea.' In the Sinaitic MS. this at first stood: 'on all that dwelt round about them and in all the hill country of Judea because of these sayings;' but this expression was modified by a later hand. 65

Enough was publicly reported to rouse a general feeling of expectancy with regard to the future career of this child, born under such strange auspices; and special marks of the divine favour were observable as he grew up. 'And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, 'What then shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him.'

Luke now mentions, as a fact which had come to his knowledge: 'And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying . . .' This requires our consideration.

The virgin's song of praise is given, but it is prefaced only with the words, 'And Mary said: 'there is no mention of inspiration. And the psalm appears to be based upon that uttered many centuries before by Hannah, under somewhat similar circumstances. But the few words spoken by Elisabeth were, in Luke's opinion, inspired, and so was the song of Zacharias. Now, how could this have been ascertained? The statement can rest only on one or more of these three things: 1. The declaration of the speaker. 2. The assumption of the hearers. 3. The nature of the words uttered.

It is reasonable to suppose that the speakers may have expressed their conviction that their words were inspired. Certainly that would be sufficient evidence to satisfy many, when taken in conjunction with the communication itself.

Or the hearers may have felt that, under the circumstances, speeches lying so far out of the range of ordinary experiences, modes of thought, and expression, must necessarily have been dictated supernaturally. The current of Jewish theological ideas had always set strongly in that direction.

Probably the three reasons above-mentioned combined to produce the conviction to the existence of which Luke testifies. He accepted it, and did not scruple to endorse it as his own belief. In the centuries which have passed since his narrative was written, men have not scrupled to assert that everything bound up in the volume called the Bible is equally inspired. This easiness of belief—or credulity—has infected learned and truth-seeking men, as well as the multitude who are ever ready to accept, without attempt at enquiry, such ideas as have the authority of responsible teachers. We find a theory of Inspiration based either upon one or two passages in the apostolic epistles, or upon the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit would guide his disciples into all truth, and which is then applied to Mark and Luke, who did not share in any special promise, not having been apostles, and who never in their narratives make any such claim. This may well make us cautious in dealing with the question. If we accept the belief of Luke as to the inspiration of Zacharias, it is because his carefully compiled narrative gives us a confidence in his judgment which we cannot have in the assertions of those who hold the prevalent doctrine as to the inspiration of the Scriptures.

The song of Zacharias is, from first to last, that of a Jew, triumphing in the fulfilment of God's promises to his nation. It begins with an ascription of praise to the God of Israel, for the visitation and redemption of His people, especially as manifested in the family of David, according to the destiny foretold for them from of old by



divinely appointed ('holy') prophets: not a lot of unmixed prosperity, but of salvation from the enemies to whom they had become subjugated. Their progenitors had been favoured, and God remembered His oath to Abraham, and performed His covenant, freeing them from bondage, that they might worship their God fearlessly, in consecration ('holiness') and rectitude ('righteousness') before Him, as long as they remained a nation.

'Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel :

1 Luke 63-75

For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,

And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of his servant David

(As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began),

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ;

To shew mercy towards our fathers,

And to remember his holy covenant,

The oath which he sware unto Abraham our father,

To grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies

Should serve him without fear,

In holiness and righteousness before him all our days.'

There is a slight alteration of the Authorised Version here. The Revisers, following the three most ancient MSS. (Sinaitic, Vatican and Alexandrine), have put 'all our days' instead of 'all the days of our life.'

Zacharias went on to foretell the great office which his son was destined to perform.

'Yea, and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most 1 Luke 76-79

High :

For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways ;

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people

In the remission of their sins,

Because of the tender mercy of our God,

Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us,

To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death ;

To guide our feet into the way of peace.'

The 'salvation' here described is of a spiritual character: and the child of Zacharias would be the harbinger of a display of divine illumination, of a 'dayspring from on high' about to be manifested.

The Revisers, but not Tischendorf, have changed 'hath visited us' into 'shall visit us,' according to the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.

These closing words of Zacharias coincide marvellously with those of the fourth evangelist. 'There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world (or, every man as he cometh).'<sup>1 John 6-9</sup> To this extent Zacharias and the evangelist John appear to have stood upon the same platform of thought.

The child John, as he grew up, manifested a strong spirit, and lived a retired life up to the time when he came prominently before

1 Luke 80

the Jewish people. 'And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.'

1 Mat. 18

The evangelist Matthew relates very briefly the chief event which Luke took such pains to chronicle with all its antecedent circumstances. He gives in the fewest words possible a statement of the stupendous miracle. 'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost (or, Holy Spirit).' It was most natural and proper that, except to Elisabeth and Zacharias, the lips of Mary should be sealed with respect to the announcement made to her by the angel. How could she speak to anyone, and especially to her betrothed, on such a matter? And who could have given credence to her tale? So, in humble, patient, submissive silence, she waited—until the fact revealed itself all too plainly. Even then she dared not speak out the mystery and marvel of the thing. The rumour of her condition came to the ears of her affianced husband; and deep was the distress it caused him. He resolved to take no harsh measures; he would not shame her by a public renunciation; but a regard for his own honour demanded that he should, with as much privacy as possible, put an end, at once and for ever, to the engagement between them. 'And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.' But while he was pondering the matter, he had a dream, which made it plain to him. A messenger of God addressed him by name, told him he need not scruple to consummate his marriage with Mary, and revealed the startling fact that her motherhood was altogether miraculous and divine. 'But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.' She would give birth to a son; and Joseph, far from repudiating the mother, must take upon himself the duty of giving to the child a name: Jesus. The term denotes a Deliverer, and the angel explained that the deliverance would be altogether spiritual. 'And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.' Evidently the great want of humanity, in the eyes of these superior Beings, was moral reformation. That was the key note in their announcements of a coming Saviour.

7 Isa. 14-16

Matthew recognized in this event the designed fulfilment of the following prophecy: 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a (or, the) virgin (or, maiden) shall conceive, and bear a son (or, is with child and beareth), and shall call his name Immanuel (that is, God is with us). Butter (or, curds) and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth (or, that he may know) to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken.' The evangelist drops all thought of the primary import of the prophecy, and fixes upon the first portion only; and certainly the supernatural event he records was enough to justify his application of the passage. 'Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the

1 Mat. 22, 23

prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel (Gr. Emmanuel) ; which is, being interpreted, God with us.'

The Revisers have changed, 'Now all this was done' into 'Now all this is come to pass,' which is consistent with the idea that the quotation was made by the angel to Joseph. But Dr. Young renders it 'And all this came to pass ;' which leaves the impression that the words are an interpolation by Matthew.

Joseph, on waking, gave full heed to his dream ; he obeyed the command of the angel, took his espoused wife under his protection, and avoided any close intercourse with her until the angel's words were fulfilled ; and when her son was born, he gave to him the name appointed. 'And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife ; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son : and he called his name Jesus.' The Revisers, following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., have altered 'her firstborn son' into 'a son.' 1 Mat. 24, 25

Luke's account of the child's birth is much fuller, and is drawn up with his usual punctilious exactness. He alludes to a decree issued at that time by a certain Roman emperor, and he mentions the name of the governor in Syria under whom it occurred. 'Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world (Gr. the inhabited earth) should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.' In accordance with this decree every one went to his native city. 'And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city.' Joseph being descended from David had to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a journey of about fifty miles. 'And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David.' With him went Mary, the journey being imperative on her also, in spite of her delicate condition : 'to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.' For her it must have been a tedious and trying journey, and the anxiety and responsibility thrown upon her betrothed must have been great indeed. There was no need of concealment between them, the same angelic revelation having been made to both. And at that long distance from home, the crisis of Mary's trial came. 'And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.' It must have been no small addition to the discomfort of the occasion to find that there was absolutely no possibility, owing to the crowd of guests, of obtaining a lodging. The mother, too, must needs act as nurse herself : as best she could she dressed her new-born babe, and laid him down in a manger. 'And she brought forth her first-born Son ; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.' 2 Luke 1, 2  
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" 7

Luke next relates a supernatural event which had been handed down to him as having occurred at the same time in the same neighbourhood. To certain shepherds, as they guarded their flocks under the open sky at night time, a marvellous revelation was made. They found themselves confronted by a superior and unearthly Being, and round about them was a glorious manifestation of brightness

2 Luke 8, 9 which awed and terrified them. 'And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.' The Revisers have made two alterations here. The Authorised Version has, 'And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them.' Following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., the word 'lo' is omitted; and instead of 'came upon them,' we have the expression 'stood by them.' Dr. Young renders, 'stood over them.' The original reading of the Sinaitic MS. was 'shone over them,' but this had been altered by a later hand.

The divine messenger spoke to them, bidding them dismiss all fear. He was the bearer to them of good and most joyful news, which  
 .. 10 should be spread throughout their nation. 'And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people.' It was the birthday of their long expected Messiah. In the city of David, David's great descendant,  
 .. 11 the anointed Lord, was born. 'For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord (or, Anointed Lord).' In their search for the child, they would recognize him by the unusual place he would be found in. Let them look for  
 .. 12 a new-born infant lying in a manger. 'And this is the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.' This simple yet marvellous message ended, there burst upon the astonished gaze of the shepherds a vision such as never before or since was granted to human eyes. A vast concourse of heavenly Beings stood revealed, who, with one accord, began to chant a song of praise. Their words were few and simple, yet of the highest import: they carolled the glory of God above, and the peace which He would grant on earth to those among the sons of men on whom  
 .. 13, 14 His approval rested. 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased (Gr., men of good pleasure).'

The last six words have been added by the Revisers from the Sinaitic, Vatican and Alexandrine MSS. Many ancient copies read: 'peace, good pleasure among men.' Another very important change has been made by the rendering 'among men,' instead of 'toward men.' It was not that God gave to men a peace or a good will which he had not granted before, but that they, living according to His will, would have peace or good pleasure among themselves.

The company of angels soared away from the earth, and the shepherds forthwith resolved to go to David's city, and search out the matter which had been thus divinely revealed to them. 'And it  
 .. 15 came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing (or, saying) that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.' They went with all speed, anxious not to lose the opportunity of seeing the future King of Israel, and they succeeded in finding the Mother and Joseph, and the child lying where they had been told to look for him. 'And they came with  
 .. 16 haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the



manger.' Having thus had ocular corroboration of the vision which had been vouchsafed to them, they scrupled not to tell others the marvellous prognostication respecting the infant. 'And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child.' It was, indeed, a strange tale to tell and hear. The wonder and the mystery of the thing were bound up with the assertions of simple-minded men, themselves as much astounded at the facts as others could be by their narrative. 'And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds.' The listeners may have been of various kinds. Some, in spite of every assertion, sceptical, and wondering only how or why such a tale had been set afloat, and that it should find believers. Others only too eager for any news of the marvellous and the supernatural. Others, versed in the Jewish Scriptures, would listen reverentially, and ponder the ancient prophecies of the Messiah, to which the recorded words of the angels pointed. Others, anxious neither to reject any well authenticated fact, nor to take for granted anything not susceptible of proof, would wonder at the story and its surroundings : such an event as the shepherds related was altogether outside the range of ordinary human experiences, and not to be believed except upon the clearest evidence ; on the other hand, what possible interest could these men have in inventing and spreading abroad a fabulous story ? how could their own earnestness and strong persuasion be accounted for, apart from some tangible basis for their statement ? and how could several men have been deceived at the same time, in the same way, and by the same circumstances ? Add to this, the grand simplicity of the angelic message, the deep spirituality of its tone, its reference to the old prophecy of a Messiah, which had been reverently held by the Jews, and say whether the difficulties in the face of disbelief were not, at least, as great as any which stood in the way of implicit faith. And the arguments which apply to this record of a particular incident dealing with the supernatural, have to be applied by us to the whole of the gospel narratives.

The person most deeply interested in all these things was Mary, the mother of the child. To others, the extraordinary circumstances were made known partially, but she had full knowledge of everything from the first, and the strongest motives for treasuring up every record, and keeping the whole in mind. 'But Mary kept all these sayings (or, things), pondering them in her heart.' The words of the evangelist indicate that for the preservation and transmission of the records we are indebted to her : it was she who 'kept all these things.' The Greek verb rendered 'kept' is *suntēreō*, which is thus defined : 'to watch closely ; to preserve, keep safe : keep in mind.' It is the same word as in the passage : 'both are preserved.' 2 Luke 19

In reviewing this narrative the question of its probable origin often presents itself to the mind. The accounts given of various events are, although brief, very circumstantial. In many cases the exact words are handed down ; and it is obvious that the first statements with respect to the matters related must have been made by the persons who were the actors or subjects of them. The vision of Zacharias could have been told only by himself. The visit and words of the angel to Mary must have been made known by her. Her meeting with Elisabeth, their conversation, and the song of

praise uttered by Mary could only have been handed down by one or both of them. Some careful hand preserved, through many changeful years, these records, together with the song of Zacharias and the carol of the angels. Others—one or two at the most—may have kept such records, but those of Mary would naturally be the most perfect, and often, doubtless, she must have perused them, constantly pondering events of so unprecedented a character, in which she and her heaven-sent child had the closest interest. Dr. Young's version brings this out more clearly. 'And all who heard, wondered concerning the things spoken by the shepherds to them; but Mary was preserving all these things, pondering in her heart.' That which to others was matter of passing comment and wonder, by her was carefully preserved.

2 Luke 20

The shepherds left Bethlehem with devout expressions of glory and praise to God. Probably they were there told some of the prior strange events we have been considering. Thus their vision of angels, and the finding of the child, would be corroborated by the things related to them by others. 'And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.'

21

In due time the Jewish rite of circumcision was performed upon the infant, and the significant name 'the salvation of the Lord' was bestowed upon him, in accordance with the angel's command to Mary. 'And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called Jesus, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.'

22, 23

About a month after the child's birth he was taken to Jerusalem, for the purpose of fulfilling the divine law observed by the Jews, as given in 12 Lev. 1—8, and to be dedicated to God as a firstborn son (13 Ex. 2). 'And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord).' The Revisers have boldly and honestly changed 'her purification' into 'their purification.' One of the ancient authorities has 'his,' which, Alford says, 'is remarkable, and hardly likely to have been a correction; but not one has "her," and the Sinaitic, Vatican and Alexandrine MSS. have "their," although in 12 Lev. 1—8 *the child* is not, as here, expressly included in the purification. The word "her" adopted by the Authorised Version, is almost without authority, and is a manifest correction.' Theological dogmas may have led to this change. 'Bengel denies that either the Lord or His mother wanted purification; and mentions that some render *their* of the Jews, but does not approve of it.' Dean Alford himself puts a note to the effect that in one sense Jesus needed purification, and in another sense he could not. We may feel quite sure that the first writer of the word 'their' had no idea of so explaining away its meaning.

12 Lev. 6, 8

On the occasion of the presentation in the temple the Mosaic law provided that the mother should bring a lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering; but 'if her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle-doves or two young pigeons: the one for a burnt offering, and the other for

a sin offering.' The circumstances of Mary led her, it would seem, to make the offering of the lower value : 'and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.' 2 Luke 24

In connection with this event another person is introduced to us, concerning whom Luke had been able to obtain the following particulars. He dwelt in Jerusalem ; his name was Simeon ; he was a man of rectitude and piety, animated with the hope of an approaching national blessing ; the Holy Spirit influenced his mind, and had revealed to him the fact that, before his time came to die, his eyes would be gladdened by the sight of the promised Messiah. 'And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon ; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel : and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.' Dr. Young's version has, 'It hath been divinely told to him by the Holy Spirit,' and Von Tischendorf's, 'He had been divinely instructed by the Holy Spirit.' This statement must have originated from Simeon himself : his character was known to others, but only he could tell the fact and nature of a divine revelation made to him. Guided by this inspiration, he waited for the child in the temple ; and when the parents entered, bringing the infant to present him according to the law, he took the little nursing in his arms, and uttered over him a devout thanksgiving. In a few words, well chosen and full of meaning, he made known the grand destiny and beneficent work appointed for the infant Christ. Simeon's life on earth would now draw to its close peacefully, God having, according to His promise, permitted his eyes to gaze upon this child, the Saviour appointed by God before the eyes of all mankind,—a new orb of light risen upon the world, to shine upon the benighted heathen, and gloriously irradiate God's chosen people. 'And he came in the Spirit into the temple : and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

.. 25, 26

.. 27-32

Now lettest thou thy servant (Gr. bondservant) depart, O Lord,  
(Gr. Master),

According to thy word, in peace ;

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples ;

A light for revelation to the Gentiles (or, the unveiling of the  
Gentiles),

And the glory of thy people Israel.'

Mary and her betrothed husband could but listen with wonder to such predictions. 'And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him.'

.. 33

The Revisers have here made a noteworthy alteration. The words 'Joseph and his mother' in the Authorised Version are now rendered 'his father and his mother,' in accordance with the reading of the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. It is rather startling, after what has gone before, to find this expression, in addition to the word 'parents' in verse 27 ; but a little consideration will show how naturally and necessarily it would come into use. The fact of the miraculous con-



ception of the child was not a thing which could be spoken about, especially as Mary was now living under the protection of her betrothed husband. Apart from all the corroborative circumstances which, by little and little, became known to the world, the true and wonderful account would have been laughed to scorn. Ostensibly and of necessity Joseph occupied the legal position of a father, and was of course so regarded and spoken of. The outside world could recognize only the external positions Mary, Joseph and the infant occupied towards each other. There is no reason to suppose that either the shepherds or Simeon knew aught beyond the revelation made to them, that the child was to prove the promised Messiah. Still, it is most improbable that Luke, with the knowledge he possessed, would have chosen such a form of expression as 'the parents' of the child, or 'his father and his mother.' He showed his respect for the records handed down to him, by transmitting them to us unaltered. The original tradition ran in that form, and so it must stand. The honesty of the Revisers faced that fact, as Luke himself had done. It is obvious, however, that this portion of the record could not have emanated from Mary or Joseph: they would not have so spoken or written. The things which were 'preserved' by Mary are stated to have been those which preceded verse 19 of this chapter.

Simeon, standing now upon the verge of death, bestowed his blessing upon Joseph and Mary, and delivered to the latter a prophetic message. Her child was ordained to be both a stumbling-stone and a restorer to many Israelites, and a mark for opposition and derision: a sharp trial would wound the mother's soul; and men's treatment of the child would serve for a revelation of their characters and motives.

2 Luke 34, 35 'And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* (*one*—Young) is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul: that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.' The Sinaitic MS. reads 'that the bad thoughts,' but a later hand had altered the passage. Probably the word 'bad' had been interpolated to show the meaning attached to the passage by the transcriber.

Another person came prominently forward at the same time as Simeon. Luke was able to supply the following particulars of the individual, who was a woman named Anna. She was 'a prophetess,' meaning, probably, a religious teacher. Her parentage and tribe were known, but her exact age Luke could not state. He could only be sure that she was very old, for she had been once a wedded wife during seven years, and a widow for eighty-four years. She must therefore have been considerably more than 100 years of age. She was always in the temple, leading an ascetic and devotional life.

36, 37 'And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow even for fourscore and four years), which departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day.' The original reading of the Sinaitic MS. was 'of about seventy-four years,' altered by a later hand to eighty-four. The Revisers have rendered 'of about' as 'even for,' differing therein from the Authorised Version, and also from Tischendorf, Young and Alford.

Age, it would seem, had not deprived Anna of her bodily activity or mental energy. She came to witness the ceremony of purification, and joined her own thanksgiving to that of Simeon. Afterwards she discoursed with all known to her, who cherished the hope of Jewish national freedom, concerning the revealed Messiah. 'And <sup>2 Luke 38</sup> coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.' In this verse the Revisers have made three alterations :

1. 'Coming in that instant' is now 'coming in at that very hour.' Von Tischendorf renders 'coming up at that very hour.' Young 'having stood by at that hour.' Alford 'coming in at the same hour.'

2. 'Gave thanks likewise unto the Lord' is now 'Gave thanks unto God.' Von Tischendorf adopts that, although he points out that the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. render 'gave thanks likewise unto God.' Young's version is, 'was confessing to the Lord.' This is the only passage in which the word (*anthōmologeito*) occurs. The verb is defined : 'to make a mutual agreement or compact. To confess or give thanks in turn.' It may be inferred that Anna took part in an alternate chant.

3. 'Redemption in Jerusalem' is now 'redemption of Jerusalem,' agreeing with the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. Von Tischendorf renders 'Jerusalem's redemption.' This is an important alteration, as showing that the coming of the Christ was bound up with the hope of a national deliverance.

After the punctilious performance of all the legal ceremonies Joseph, with his wife and the infant, returned to their home in Nazareth. 'And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.' It is not a little strange to find that the original reading of the Sinaitic MS. was in the singular, 'and when he had accomplished—he returned.' Von Tischendorf expresses this opinion : 'I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, many arbitrary alterations and additions were made in them.'

Luke has now completed his account of the infant life of Jesus ; but Matthew tells us something more, and which is strange and startling. He agrees with Luke in fixing the place of birth at Bethlehem, adding that it was in the days of King Herod. He states that wise men (Magi) from the east came to Jerusalem, in search of a newly-born king of the Jews, explaining that they had seen his star in their own eastern country, and had come for the purpose of doing homage to him. 'Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of <sup>2 Mat. 1, 2</sup> Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men (Gr. Magi) from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.' Young translates, 'to bow to him.'

The first question which presents itself is as to the Magi. The Revisers have inserted a note referring to 1 Esther 13, and 2 Daniel 12, in which passages 'wise men' are alluded to, in the former as 'knowing the times.' Alford says : 'From what has been written on the subject it would appear that "the East" may mean either Arabia, Persia, Chaldea, or Parthia, with the provinces

adjacent. In all these countries there were Magi, at least persons who in the wider sense of the word were now known by the name. The words in verse 2 seem to point to some land not very near Judea, as also the result of Herod's enquiry as to the date, shewn in "two years old."

'If we place together (a) the prophecy in 24 Num. 17, which could hardly be unknown to the eastern astrologers, and (b) the assertion of Suetonius, that there prevailed an ancient and consistent opinion in all the East, that it was fated that at that time those should go forth from Judea who should rule the empire : and of Tacitus, to the same effect and nearly in the same words, and (c) the prophecy, also likely to be known in the East, of the seventy weeks in 9 Dan. 24, we can, I think, be at no loss to understand how any remarkable celestial appearance at this time should have been interpreted as it was.' Alford elaborates the theory that a remarkable conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn was the origin of the wise men's journey ; but he admits that the fact seems to have been substantiated, that the planets did not, during the year B.C. 7, approach each other so as to be mistaken for one star. We must be content to remain as ignorant of the basis of the expectation formed by the Magi as, probably, were the men of that day to whom it was communicated. We may venture to picture to ourselves the excitement which the arrival of the 'wise men' must have occasioned in Jerusalem : the strangeness of their apparel, faces and language, the beasts of burden they had made use of for their journey, their equipage and servants, and the extraordinary nature of their errand. Coming in search of a King they would naturally look to find him in a palace ; probably they went direct to Herod, and greatly must he have marvelled on being made acquainted with their quest. He was perplexed and anxious about the matter, and the whole city was in commotion. 'And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.' He was no favourite with the people. Alford states : 'His cruelties, and his affectation of Gentile customs, gained for him a hatred among the Jews, which neither his magnificent rebuilding of the temple, nor his liberality in other public works, nor his provident care of the people during a severe famine, could mitigate.' The expectation of a coming King might foment the growing discontent, and form the groundwork of rebellion. He resolved to act with consummate duplicity. Knowing well the anticipations of a Messiah cherished by the Jews, he affected an interest in the question, and summoned the Sanhedrim with the object of obtaining reliable information as to the locality in which it was foretold that the Messiah would be born. 'And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born.' Turning to their ancient prophecies, they agreed as to the place. 'And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea : for thus it is written by the prophet,

And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah :  
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,  
Which shall be shepherd of my people Israel.'

The original prophecy stands as follows : 'But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands (or, families) of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in

2 Mat. 3

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5, 6

5 Mic. 2



Israel ; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting (or, from ancient days).’

Herod’s next step was to give the wise men a private audience, when he took care to ascertain from them the exact time at which the star first made its appearance. ‘Then Herod privily called the wise <sup>2 Mat. 7</sup> men, and learned of them carefully what time the star appeared (or, the time of the star that appeared).’ Young translates, ‘inquired exactly of them the time of the appearing star’; Von Tischendorf, ‘inquired accurately of them the time of the star’s appearance.’ Then he communicated to the Magi the information he had obtained, and directed them to search carefully in Bethlehem for the child, and when they had discovered him, to return with the information, in order that Herod himself might join in the act of homage. ‘And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search ,, 8 out carefully concerning the young child ; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.’ Having received this direction and assurance from Herod, they proceeded on their mission. And then again they saw the star which had been revealed to them in their own country, and followed up its course, until it stopped and stood still over a particular spot. Great was their joy on beholding once more this guiding light. ‘And they, ,, 9, 10 having heard the king, went their way ; and lo, the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.’

Are we not forced to regard this appearing and travelling of a star, as a prodigy ? No merely astronomical explanation meets the requirements of the narrative. There may be connections between earthly and heavenly things unknown to us, but which the minds of these eastern sages had been able to pierce. There may have been much of wisdom in the ancient lore of Chaldean astrology, albeit the science may have been lost, and its errors and absurd guesses after truth alone survive. Or these men may have received supernatural illumination by dream or otherwise, and have found their expectations corroborated by some meteor-like manifestation. If aught of error clings to the tradition it still must have had a basis of historical truth ; and the supermundane marvels which have been so methodically and carefully related by Luke, have prepared our minds to accept as credible this account of Matthew.

When the Magi entered the house to which they had been thus strangely guided, they found the child they had been so long in search of. The object of their journey was accomplished ; they prostrated themselves, and bowed to the infant with lowliest reverence : they opened their treasure chests, and placed in his hands or laid at his feet their choicest emblematic gifts. ‘And they came into the house ,, 11 and saw the young child with Mary his mother : and they fell down and worshipped him ; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.’

This fact is unique in history. We can understand ambassadors being sent to a foreign potentate, as representatives of their country, for various purposes. But these men came to seek a new-born child, conscious in their own minds of his future destiny, and anxious only to render him external marks of homage. That done, they had

nothing to gain, nothing to hope. It was the instinct of reverence which drew them to his presence and bowed them at his feet. It was worship in its true and highest form: they came not to receive, but to give; not to offer prayers, but fealty. As 'King of the Jews' they worshipped him. Possibly they were acquainted with the prophecy of Balaam:

'I see him, but not now:

I behold him, but not nigh:

There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,

And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.'

The American Committee of Revisers have placed on record the following note, which bears upon this subject. 'At the word *worship* in Mat. ii. 2, etc., add the marginal note, "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to man (see chap. xviii. 26) or to God (see chap. iv. 10)."'

The Magi, being supernaturally warned, avoided Herod, and returned to their own country without passing through Jerusalem. 'And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.' The Revisers have placed the words 'of God' in italics, which was not done in the Authorised Version. Young renders, 'having been divinely warned in a dream;' Von Tischendorf 'being divinely instructed in a dream.'

After their departure, a messenger from God appeared in a dream to Joseph, and told him to carry the child and Mary to Egypt, and to remain there until a similar message should be sent for their return. This flight was necessary to avoid the pursuit of Herod, who was about to aim at the child's life. 'Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.' Recognizing the urgency of the matter, and the danger in which they stood, Joseph forthwith acted upon the warning. Not an hour did he lose, but rising from sleep, he started at once, under cover of the night, and began the journey towards Egypt, which (Alford explains) 'as near, as a Roman province and independent of Herod, and much inhabited by Jews, was an easy and convenient refuge.' 'And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.' There they remained until news came of Herod's death. In all this Matthew saw the fulfilment of a prophecy. 'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.' 'And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.' When Herod found that his injunctions to the Magi had been contemptuously disregarded, he gave way to an ungovernable fit of fury. He had failed in his effort to discover the child believed to be the destined king of the Jews. His cunning scheme to identify and kill him had been, in some mysterious way, seen through and baffled. But in his unscrupulous determination to make short work of such a prediction, he hesitated not to destroy at once every child to whom it could apply. He sent orders for the massacre of all infants in and about Bethlehem not exceeding the age of two years. 'Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth,

24 Num. 17

2 Mat. 12

„ 13

„ 14

11 Hos. 1

2 Mat. 15

„ 16



and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully learned of the wise men.' Here Matthew quotes and applies the following prophecy: 'Thus saith the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth to be comforted for her children, because they are not.' Rachel's sepulchre was 'in the way to Ephrath (the same is Bethlehem),' so that no allusion could be more fitting, nor any words more appropriately describe this slaughter of the children there. A more accurate 'fulfilment' there could scarcely be; but such fulfilment must not be regarded as advanced by way of proof or attestation of Scripture. There is no ground for that idea, which obviously was not in the mind of Matthew in applying the quotations. 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by (or, through) Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

31 Jer. 15

35 Gen. 19

2 Mat. 17, 18

A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
And she would not be comforted, because they are not.'

Alford observes: 'Josephus makes no mention of this slaughter. Probably no great number of children perished in so small a place as Bethlehem and its neighbourhood. . . . But such an act is in harmony with the character of this tyrant. . . . Herod had marked the way to his throne, and his reign itself, with blood; had murdered his wife and three sons (the last just about this time); and was likely enough, in blind fury, to have made no enquiries, but given the savage order at once.'

He did not long survive; and when his death occurred, a divine messenger again appeared, in a dream, to Joseph, acquainted him with the fact, and bade him take back the child and his mother to their own country. 'But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life.' This he did, but could not venture to enter into Judea, having learnt that a son of Herod was ruler there. Warning and guidance came to him in slumber, as before; he went to Galilee, and dwelt there in the city Nazareth. 'And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.' In this fact Matthew again recognizes a fulfilment of prophecy. 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by (or, through) the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.' The following note on this by Dean Alford is interesting. 'These words are nowhere verbatim to be found, nor is this asserted by the Evangelist; but that the sense of the prophets is such. In searching for such sense, the following hypotheses have been made, none of them satisfactory: (1) Euthymius says, "Do not enquire what prophets said this: for you will not find out: because many of the prophetic books have perished, some in the captivities, some by neglect of the Jews, some also by foul play." So also Chrysostom and others. But

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the expression "by the prophets" seems to have a wider bearing than is thus implied. (2) Others say, the general sense of the prophets is, that Christ should be a despised person, as the inhabitants of Nazareth were (John i. 47). But surely this part of the Messiah's prophetic character is not general or prominent enough, in the absence of any direct verbal connexion with the word in our text, to found such an interpretation on, nor, on the other hand, does it appear that an inhabitant of Nazareth, as such, was despised; only that the obscurity of the town was, both by Nathanael and the Jews, contrasted with our Lord's claim. (3) The Nazarites of old were men holy and consecrated to God; *e.g.*, Samson (Judg. xiii. 5), Sammel (1 Sam. i. 11), and to this the words are referred by Tertullian, Jerome, and others. But (a) our Lord did not (like John the Baptist) lead a life in accordance with the Nazarite vow, but drank wine, &c., and set himself in marked contrast with John in this very particular (ch. xi. 18, 19): and, (b) the word here is not Nazarite, but Nazarene, denoting an inhabitant of Nazareth. (4) There may be an allusion to the Hebrew "Netser," a branch, by which name our Lord is called in Isa. xi. 1, and from which word it appears that the name Nazareth is probably derived. So "learned Hebrews" mentioned by Jerome on Isa. xi. 1, and others. But the word is only used in the place cited: and in by far the more precise prophecies of the Branch, Zech. iii. 8: vi. 12; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15, and Isa. iv. 2, the word "Tsemach" is used. I leave it therefore as an unsolved difficulty.'

As far as we can venture to draw a conclusion from Matthew's frequent quotations from the prophets, thus much seems clear: That he did not regard the fulfilments indicated by him as proofs to us of prophetic foreknowledge. With the exception of the prophecy relating to Bethlehem (5 Mic. 2), the passages referred to had evidently a primary and wholly different significance; and now we find him applying to the dwelling of the Christ at Nazareth an expression which he describes simply as having been 'spoken by the prophets,' not caring even to identify the passages or the prophets.

Were the quotations made, then, with the purpose of proving the Messiahship of Jesus? No: how can they produce that conviction in the mind of anyone? Isaiah prophesied that a 'young woman' should bear a son named Emmanuel. Micah foretold that the Christ should come from Bethlehem. Hosca had said, of the children of Israel, 'Out of Egypt I have called for my son.' Jeremiah, writing of the Babylonish captivity, had pictured a slaughter of infants in Ramah. Prophets had spoken, in some way, of a Nazarene. What is there, in any one of these passages, to identify Jesus? Evidently some totally different principle of interpretation lies at the root of these applications of the prophetic writings.

Comparing this second chapter of Matthew with 2 Luke 39, 40. Dean Alford observes: 'This part of the gospel history is one where the Harmonists, by their arbitrary reconcilements of the two Evangelistic accounts, have given great advantage to the enemies of the faith. As the two accounts now stand, it is wholly impossible to suggest any satisfactory method of uniting them; every one who has attempted it has, in some part or other of his hypothesis, violated probability and common sense.' The difficulty, as stated by Alford, is this: The obvious inference from 2 Luke 39, is, 'that Joseph

and Mary returned from Jerusalem to Nazareth direct.' Let us accept that inference as correct, which Alford hesitates to do. Then, on 2 Mat. 22, he remarks: 'This account gives rise to some difficulty as compared with St. Luke's history. It would certainly, on a first view, appear that this Evangelist was not aware that Nazareth had been before this the abode of Joseph and Mary. . . . I should prefer believing, as more consistent with the fair and conscientious interpretation of our text, that St. Matthew himself was not aware of the events related in Luke i., ii., and wrote under the impression that Bethlehem was the original dwelling-place of Joseph and Mary.' That is possible and probable. Let us, for the argument's sake, admit that also.

Now, what are the facts? Luke tells us that after the presentation in the temple, which would be about a month after the child's birth, Joseph and his mother 'returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.' Matthew appears to be relating events which happened later, for the result of Herod's careful enquiries would seem to have indicated that he could not be sure of including this child in the slaughter without killing all children up to the age of two years. He believed the infant to be in or near Bethlehem, and thither the Magi were sent to seek him. We are not told where they found him. We read that the shepherds saw 'the babe lying IN THE MANGER,' but that the Magi 'came INTO THE HOUSE and saw the young child,' their visit being obviously at some later period. The silence of the narrative on this point leaves it possible that the star may have gone before them as far as Nazareth. As the Magi withheld all information from Herod, he could only assume that Bethlehem was the place, and to slay every child in that neighbourhood seemed the surest way of quenching the hopes of the Jews, founded upon a prophecy that their Messiah must be born there.

But let us assume, on the contrary, that the Magi found Mary and the child at Bethlehem; in favour of which assumption it may with reason be urged that the tenor of the narrative implies that the warning to Joseph referred to an immediate escape from Bethlehem, rather than to any risk to the child's life which might arise from enquiries made by, or information conveyed to Herod subsequent to the slaughter there. Then, to harmonise the accounts of Luke and Matthew, we have merely to take it for granted that Mary, some time within two years of her going to Nazareth, had returned with her child and husband to Bethlehem. Is there aught incredible or unnatural in that supposition? What more probable, remembering that it was their custom, as we know, to go up every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover? It seems most likely, however, that the Magi found the child at Nazareth.

A more important question for our consideration is that of the probable source of the information which has been conveyed to us by Matthew. He tells nothing of the angel's visit to Mary, the account of which could have been derived from her alone; but he tells, what Luke omits, a dream which was sent to Joseph respecting Mary. Obviously that could have been first communicated only by Joseph. The visit of the Magi, the commotion in Jerusalem, the meeting of the Sanhedrim, and the slaughter of the children, were obtainable like any other facts of current history. But the dream sent to the

Magi would be told by them only to those about them at the time, and the two subsequent dreams of Joseph, and the motive which induced him to avoid Judea on his return from Egypt, must have been first mentioned by him. Matthew may have heard these things from Joseph's own lips, or they may have been obtained from some written record of his.

2 Luke 40

The infancy of Jesus is summed up in a few words. As the child grew he developed a strong constitution; he displayed remarkable ability, and manifestations of Divine favour towards him were not wanting. 'And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom (Gr. becoming full of wisdom): and the grace of God was upon him.'

1 Luke 40

His 'parents' (for Joseph from the first had occupied in the eyes of the world the position of a father) went yearly to Jerusalem at passover time. Probably Mary may have been glad to visit occasionally her relative Elisabeth, who lived in a city of Judah; besides which, 'women, according to the maxims of the school of Hillel, were bound to go up once in the year—to the passover' (Alford). 'And his parents went up every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover.'

2 Luke 41

On one of these occasions, when the youth was twelve years old, an incident occurred which was remarkable in many ways. The days of the feast being over, when the others returned homewards, Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem. He had not intimated any intention of doing so, and therefore his parents supposed that he was with some of 'the caravan, or band of travellers; all who came from the same district travelling together for security and company' (Alford). But when they halted for the night, and still he did not appear, they became anxious. They made enquiries among those relatives and acquaintances with whom he would be likely to associate. But they could gain no tidings of him, and were therefore forced to retrace their steps to Jerusalem, hoping either to meet him on the way or to find him there. 'And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents (Authorised Version: 'Joseph and his mother,' altered to agree with the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.) knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.' But their search was unsuccessful: not until three days had been spent in vain efforts and anxious suspense, did they find him. He was at last discovered in the temple, probably 'in one of the rooms attached to the temple, where the Rabbis taught their schools' (Alford). There he was, seated among the Teachers, listening to them, putting questions to them, and astounding all present by the power of his intellect and the sagacity of his observations. 'And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors (or, teachers), both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.' Evidently he had been so absorbed by this occupation, as to overlook the flight of time and all minor matters. His parents stood wrapped in wonder; the fulness of his

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mother's heart found vent in a loving expostulation. Why had he dealt so with them? She and his father had been long seeking him with grief and anxiety. 'And when they saw him, they were astonished: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.' His reply was calm, frank and unembarrassed: he was conscious of no need for excuse or explanation. His absence was no fault; only they were wrong in seeking him. Did they not know that the place to find him was in his Father's house? 'And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?' The note of the Revisers is: 'or, About my Father's business. Gr. In the things of my Father.' Young translates: 'In the house of my father it behoveth me to be.' Von Tischendorf: 'I must be in my Father's house.' The child appeared intuitively to ignore the reputed paternity of Joseph. Obviously there was deep meaning in this reply of Jesus, but the hearers were not able to grasp it. 'And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.' Alford remarks: 'Both Joseph and His mother knew in some sense, Who he was: but were not prepared to hear so direct an appeal to God as His Father: understood not the deeper sense of these wonderful words.' That observation appears to miss the point aimed at. The words implied that Jesus had resolved upon his career: that he had now a definite place to fill and work to begin; otherwise there was no more reason why he should be found in God's temple now than at any time previously. Take all the circumstances recorded up to this time, and see how difficult it must have been to comprehend his answer to his mother's expostulation. He was to 'be called the Son of the Most High.' That might explain why, in a special sense, he should call God his Father. But then it had been said: 'And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.' He was therefore destined to be the king of Israel, and as such he had been worshipped by the Magi. He was revealed to the shepherds as 'a Saviour, the anointed Lord,' and Simeon recognized him as the promised Messiah. What was to be his course of action? How was this visit to the temple to help forward his career? None, then, could anticipate that he would go forth, as we now know he did, to teach and work miracles among men. His saying pointed to a certain sphere of action, but beyond that, they could gather from it nothing.

But having given the evidence of a freedom of judgment and independence of spirit altogether exceptional in one so young, the youth submitted at once to parental guidance. He returned with them to Nazareth, and there placed himself under their direction. We can imagine, however, with what interest his mother, especially, must have watched the development of his character, and pondered over his possible future. That saying of his in Jerusalem clung to her memory, and, together with all the other wonderful things relating to him, formed a constant subject of her meditation. 'And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings (or, things) in her heart.'

As time passed on, Jesus developed other evidences of mental and bodily growth, and the sweetness of his disposition gained for him

2 Luke 48

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the friendship of all about him; nor were there wanting marks of the Divine favour towards him. ‘And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature (or, age), and in favour (or, grace) with God and men.’

At this point of the history the four evangelists begin their respective gospel narratives with an account of the mission of John the Baptist. Luke is careful to fix the date of the incidents by a reference to contemporaneous events. ‘Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.’ This was about thirty years after the events we have been considering, the time being thus fixed by Alford: ‘These dates are consistent with the accurate tracing down which St. Luke predicates of himself, ch. i. 3. In Matt. iii. 1, we have the same events indicated as to time by only “In those days.” The fifteenth year of the sole principate of Tiberius began Aug. 19, in the year of Rome 781, and reckoning backwards thirty years from that time (see verse 23) we should have the birth of our Lord in 751, or about then; for “about thirty” will admit of some latitude. But Herod the Great died in the year 750, and our Lord’s birth must be fixed some months at least before the death of Herod.’ The two children, John the son of Zacharias and Jesus the son of Mary, whose birth had happened so marvellously, and of whom such great predictions had been uttered by angels, by prophets, and by the Magi, were now grown into manhood. John had been living ‘in the deserts,’ and Jesus was passing an obscure existence in Nazareth. A new generation had risen up since that eventful day when Zacharias had been startled by the vision of an angel in the temple. Probably he and his aged wife had long since finished their earthly course. Where were the shepherds who had been privileged to listen entranced to the carol of the angels? What had become of the Magi? What a multitude of those who had known of their errand to Jerusalem must have passed away! The hand of time had wrought its changes on Joseph and Mary, and the experiences of ordinary life had thrown more and more into the background the mysteries and marvels which had absorbed their interest so many years before. They were things to ponder over, rather than to speak about. But now the two men, on whom the hopes of men and angels had been taught to rest, step forth from their retirement: John first, and Jesus shortly afterwards.

Luke states that while John was in the desert a divine communication was made to him. ‘The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.’ Thus commissioned, he entered upon the career of a preacher, not in Jerusalem or any popular resort, but ‘in the wilderness of Judea.’ He went from place to place, ‘into all the region round about Jordan.’ To give meaning and emphasis to his preaching, he caused his disciples to be bathed in water, so that he became known as ‘John the Baptist.’ His great subject was—Reform; not political, but moral; not national, but personal. Mark and Luke summarise it by saying that he preached ‘the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.’ ‘Repentance’ and ‘reformation’ are synonymous. The word ‘remission’ occurs here for the first time in Scripture, except that it was used by

Zacharias. We may take it in its primary sense, to 'send back' or 'send away.' The washing in water signified the entrance upon a pure, blameless life. 1 Luke 77

All four evangelists quote with respect to the Baptist's mission the passage in 40 Isa. 3: 'The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness (or, that crieth in the wilderness. Prepare ye) the way of the Lord, make straight (or, level) in the desert a high way for our God.' 'As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,' 3 Luke 4  
2 Mat. 3

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,  
Make his paths straight.'

Luke adds another verse to the quotation:

'Every valley shall be filled,  
And every mountain and hill shall be brought low;  
And the crooked shall become straight,  
And the rough ways smooth:  
And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'

3 Luke 5, 6

Mark prefaces the quotation by another: 'Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet,' 1 Mark 2

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,  
Who shall prepare thy way.'

The words are not found in Isaiah, but in Malachi: 'Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.' Some ancient authorities read, instead of 'In Isaiah the prophet,' 'in the prophets,' which was adopted in the Authorised Version; but the Revisers have followed the two oldest MSS. Mark appears also to have been inaccurate in another point: 'Before thy face' is, in Malachi 'before me.' There is nothing to wonder at in differences of this kind. Eighteen centuries ago men could not turn to a complete copy of the Jewish Scriptures: the manuscripts were bulky, costly, separated into portions. In making quotations it was often necessary to rely on the memory.

Matthew tells us that John enforced his call to reformation thus: 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Alford states that this is 'an expression peculiar in the N. T. to St. Matthew. The more usual one is "the kingdom of God;" but "the kingdom of heaven" is common in the Rabbinical writers, who do not, however, except in one or two places, mean by it the reign of the Messiah, but the Jewish religion—the theocracy.'

The new doctrine was brought by a strange preacher. Having passed, probably, many years of his life in the desert, he differed from other men, not only in the style of his thought and speech, but in dress and food. His garment was of woven camel's hair, with a simple girdle of dressed skin, and his food was such as the wilderness supplied—locusts and the honey of wild bees. 'And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey.' Alford observes: 'There is no difficulty here. The locust, permitted to be eaten, Levit. xi. 22, was used as food by the lower orders in Judea, and mentioned by Strabo and Pliny as eaten by the Ethiopians, and by many other authors, as articles of food. Jerome mentions it as the custom in the East and Libya: and Shaw found locusts eaten by the Moors in Barbary.'

There was that in the new teacher and his message which attracted crowds of listeners. The evangelists use the strongest terms in stating this: there would seem to have been a great exodus of the population, not only from places in the neighbourhood, but also from Jerusalem and Judea. Luke speaks of 'the multitudes,' and Matthew says, 'Then went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.' Nor were they merely curious, critical hearers. The preacher gained so great a hold upon their minds and hearts that they submitted to the rite of baptism which he had inaugurated, and, as the first step towards the reformed life, they acknowledged openly the transgressions of the past. 'And they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.'

The adoption of baptism by John, and the ready submission of the people to it, indicate that it was a ceremony previously known and recognized. Alford explains: 'When *men* were admitted as proselytes, three rites were performed, circumcision, baptism, and oblation; when *women*, two—baptism and oblation. The baptism was administered in the daytime, by immersion of the whole person; and while standing in the water the proselyte was instructed in certain portions of the law. The whole families of proselytes, including infants, were baptized. It is most probable that John's baptism in outward form resembled that of proselytes. Some deny that the proselyte baptism was in use before the time of John: but the contrary has been generally supposed and maintained. Indeed the baptism or lustration of a proselyte on admission would follow, as a matter of course, by analogy from the constant legal practice of lustration after all uncleanness: and it is difficult to imagine a time when it would not be in use. Besides, it is highly improbable that the Jews should have borrowed the rite from the Christians, or the Jewish hierarchy from John.'

Among those who came to John's baptism were many Pharisees and Sadducees. They ranked highest in the Jewish Church at that time, but to them, as a class, John showed himself bitterly hostile. He scrupled not to address them in a tone of indignation, if not of contempt, terming them, and their fathers before them, 'vipers.' He expressed surprise that any influence whatever could have prevailed upon them to recognize and deprecate a coming judgment. 'But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Luke modifies somewhat the incidence of this reproach, taking it as addressed 'to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him.' Putting the two accounts together, it would seem that the words were spoken to the hearers generally, but on an occasion when a large number of the Pharisees and Sadducees were among them: no exception was made in favour of these sects, notwithstanding their high pretensions to moral and intellectual superiority. This being the first mention of them, it will be well to turn to Alford's description: 'These two sects, according to Josephus, originated at the same period, under Jonathan the high priest (B.C. 159—144). The Pharisees, deriving their name probably from "Parash," "he separated," took for their distinctive practice the strict observance of the law and all its requirements, written and oral. They had great power over the people, and are

3 Mat. 5

1 Mark 5

3 Mat. 7

3 Luke 7



numbered by Josephus as being, about the time of the death of Herod the Great, above 6000. . . . The Sadducees are *said* to have derived their name from one Sadok, about the time of Alexander the Great (B.C. 323): but they were named from the Hebrew Tsaddik, righteousness, more probably. The denial of a future state does not appear to have been an original tenet of Sadduceism, but to have sprung from its abuse. The particular side of religionism represented by the Sadducees was bare literal moral conformity, without any higher views or hopes. Thus they escaped the dangers of tradition, but fell into deadness and worldliness, and a denial of spiritual influence.'

John exhorted them and all to show the sincerity of that reformation which baptism signified, by living thenceforth a changed life. 'Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance (or, your repentance).'<sup>3 Mat. 8</sup> Young translates, 'worthy of reformation.' Let them not rely on that descent from Abraham of which they were accustomed to boast. If moral qualities were not to be regarded, let them know that God could transform the very stones they trod on into living semblances of Abraham. 'And think not (Luke: begin not) to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.'<sup>3 Luke 8</sup> The time was one of judgment and discrimination. The trees were being marked out for clearing by the woodman's axe, and every fruitless, worthless tree would be cut down for fuel. 'And even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.'<sup>3 Mat. 10</sup>

Touched by the preacher's earnest words, the people asked him for more explicit directions as to their mode of life. 'And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do?' Any simple acts of brotherly kindness, was the answer. 'And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise.'<sup>3 Luke 10</sup> This seems to imply that the absence of such a spirit of compassion was a characteristic of society at that time.<sup>11</sup>

Among those who came to receive baptism, were certain collectors or renters of Roman taxes. They also enquired what special duties were laid upon them. 'And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Master (or, Teacher), what must we do?' Practise common honesty, was the reply. 'And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.'<sup>12</sup><sup>13</sup>

Soldiers also, properly 'men on march' (Alford), or 'those making war' (Young), came to receive instruction from the desert preacher, and asked what obligation appertained to their course of life. 'And soldiers (Gr., soldiers on service) also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do?' Renounce plunder, with its accompaniments of violence and false accusation, and be content to live on a soldier's pittance: that would be their best evidence of reformation. 'And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither exact *anything* (or, accuse *anyone*) wrongfully; and be content with your wages.' The American Revisers translate thus: 'Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse anyone wrongfully.'<sup>14</sup>

Preaching such as this was bold indeed, heart-searching, practical. The rising up of this new teacher, his popularity, and the nature of

his doctrine, raised a wide-spread expectation of some approaching revelation. Might it not be, men asked themselves, that John himself would prove to be the long expected Messiah? 'And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ. . . .' The question would seem to have been earnestly debated among the Jewish spiritual rulers, and it was deemed of so much importance that a formal deputation of priests and Levites was sent from Jerusalem to ascertain from the Baptist himself the nature of his claims. They put the question plainly: Who was he? and he answered unhesitatingly that he was not the Messiah. 'And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ.' What, then, was his position with respect to the work he had undertaken? Was he Elijah? They could well believe as much, for 'Lightfoot cites from the Rabbinical books testimonies that the Jews expected a general purification or baptism before the coming of the Messiah (from Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, and Zech. xiii. 1), and that it would be administered by Elias' (Alford). That idea John disclaimed. 'And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not.' Was he the prophet for whom they looked, as foretold by Moses, 18 Den. 15, 18? Nay. 'Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No.' But a definite reply of some kind they must needs take back. Whatever he would say about himself, they were ready to hear and to report. 'They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?' John replied by an extremely apposite quotation from 40 Isa. 3. 'He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet.' Apart from any idea of the fulfilment of prophecy, no words could better represent the position taken up by the Baptist: they described with the utmost accuracy the place, nature and object of his preaching. It was on the authority of John himself that the first three evangelists applied the prophet's words to him.

The deputation to John had emanated from the sect of the Pharisees; and having obtained an answer which dissipated such ideas as they had formed with respect to him, they proceeded to question his authority to administer baptism. 'And they had been sent from the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet.' John replied that he simply bathed them in water as symbolizing and anticipating reformation, but there was one in the midst of them, unknown, unrecognized, destined to be his successor, who possessed far greater power, who was infinitely more worthy, and who would bathe them in the spirit consecrated to God's service, and in fire: that is, instead of repentance the indwelling energy of divine life, and instead of water to the typical washing away of moral defilements, fire to burn them up. 'John answered them, saying, I baptize with (or, in) water . . . unto repentance . . . : in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to . . . stoop down and . . . unloose.' 'He shall baptize you with

3 Luke 15

1 John 19, 20

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1 John 26, 27

3 Mat. 11

1 Mark 7

3 Luke 16



(or, in) the Holy Ghost and with fire.' The Revisers have italicised the word 'with.' Tischendorf, Young and Samuel Sharpe omit the 'with.' It would be interesting and instructive to know the nature and tone of the discussions among the Revisers on various passages. Alterations of the Authorised Version were put to the vote, and never adopted unless two thirds of those present and voting agreed, so that sometimes the view of the majority was not acted upon. The Revisers' preface alludes to 'abounding difficulties,' and then proceeds, 'we have felt more and more, as we went onward, that such a work can never be accomplished by organised efforts of scholarship and criticism, *unless assisted by Divine help.*' Surely every clear, unprejudiced mind must see much to regret in such an assumption as that. The man who could write the passage, and the men who could agree with it, were swayed as much by theological dogmas as by critical scholarship. Shall we take it as an instance of 'Divine help,' that they deliberately retained the inserted word 'with' before 'fire?' In what class of passages did they imagine themselves to have needed and received "Divine help?" To the Revisers the whole body of Christians owes a debt of gratitude for their valuable and honest work; but it is to be regretted that they were misled by prejudice and would not avail themselves of light from all quarters. A learned Unitarian was forbidden to continue his sittings with the Revisers, some of whom complained bitterly that he should have been admitted to join with them in the Lord's Supper. One of the Revisers, however, thought it his duty, and courageously acted upon it, to dissociate himself from the work of revision, as a public and solemn protest against the expulsion of the Unitarian. Coming generations will read with wondering sorrow the following records standing in 'Annals of our Time.'

22 June, 1870. 'The Revisers of the Authorised Version of the New Testament meet for the first time at the Jerusalem Chamber, and sit for five hours. Prior to engaging in this responsible undertaking, the party received the Holy Communion in Westminster Abbey at the hands of Dean Stanley. There were bishops of the Established Church; two of them by their venerable years connected with the past generation; the representatives of historic cathedrals and collegiate churches, of learned universities, of laborious parochial charges, and of the chief ecclesiastical Convocation: and with these, intermingled without distinction, were ministers of the Established and of the Free Church of Scotland, and of almost every Nonconformist Church in England—Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan, and Unitarian. The presence of the last (Mr. Vance Smith) gave rise to a discussion in Convocation, and a sharp controversy among ritualists. "I did not go (wrote Mr. Smith) under any false pretence of professing one thing while believing another; and, of course, I retained my own ideas as to the nature of the rite. No one asked me what these were, or required me to disavow them. And to me, I may add, the ceremony is simply a memorial service, done 'in remembrance'—in grateful and devout remembrance—but further implying, of necessity, the open profession of discipleship to Christ. Why should not Christian men of all Protestant names be able to 'do this,' and make their confession of discipleship, in each other's company?"'

13 August, 1870. 'In answer to a memorial signed by 1500 clergymen of the Church of England concerning the recent mixed communion in Westminster Abbey, the Archbishop of Canterbury writes that it was deeply to be deplored harsh words should have been used in the heat of controversy, and uncharitable accusations made against good men, who had no desire but to follow the Lord's command in asking for a blessing on their labour by uniting in this holy rite. "I think, moreover," he adds, "it is a melancholy thing, whosoever may be to blame for it, that the religious faith of an individual communicant should have become the subject of newspaper controversy, not conducted throughout in the Christian spirit which thinks and speaks no evil."'

15 February, 1871. 'In the Upper House of Convocation a motion submitted by the Bishop of Winchester, excluding Unitarians from the work of revising the Authorised Version of Scripture was carried by a majority of 10 to 4. In the lower House this resolution was so far modified as to preclude any expression of opinion on the point raised till a special committee appointed for the purpose had made their report.'

17 February, 1871. 'In the Lower House Dean Stanley defended his proceedings in the matter known as the "Westminster Communion." Nothing, he said, which the House might think fit to pass should prevent him from acting upon the principle upon which he had acted when he was the celebrant in Henry the Seventh's Chapel; and more, nothing which the House could pass could deprive him of his right as a clergyman to administer the sacrament under other laws and other rules than the laws and rules of the Church of England. Nor would he allow himself to be brought down from the high position which his office gave him by any vote; and he quoted the words of American bishops as to the true catholicity of the English Church, in its being unfenced about by declarations required in some sects, thanking God from the bottom of his heart that the English Church was thus free, that he had had the opportunity of showing this before the face of the world, and that he was able thus to follow Bishop Wilson's well-known acts.'

The Baptist further described the works of his successor by picturing him as a husbandman, standing on the 'open hard-trodden space in the middle of the field,' known as 'the floor,' using the fan in his hand to remove everything from the threshed-out wheat, and afterwards collecting the separated chaff and burning it. 'Whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.' The author of 'The Land and the Book' says: 'Very little use is now made of the fan, but I have seen it employed to purge the floor of the refuse dust, which the owner throws away as useless.'

This is by no means a summary of the whole of John's preaching. He exhorted the people in many ways, and throughout his discourses there was a current of joy and hope: he was always proclaiming 'good news.' 'With many other exhortations therefore preached he good tidings (or, the gospel) unto the people.'

When the deputation visited John he was in some place eastward

of the Jordan, probably about twenty miles from Jerusalem. ‘These things were done in Bethany (or—Bethabara or Betharabah) beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.’ When all present had been baptized, Jesus presented himself to receive baptism, having come specially from Galilee for the purpose. ‘Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.’ This was the day following that on which John had discoursed with the priests and Levites from Jerusalem. The Baptist at once recognized Jesus, and spoke of him in terms of highest eulogy. ‘On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin (or, beareth the sin) of the world!’ This remarkable expression demands careful consideration. Alford says of it: ‘This is one of the most important and difficult sayings in the New Testament.’ In Jewish ears, a ‘lamb of God’ would naturally signify a lamb devoted to God; and the mention of such a lamb ‘taking away’ or ‘bearing’ sin, identified it as a lamb appointed for sacrifice. To that extent John’s saying explained itself. The conclusion seems obvious enough: that John regarded Jesus as an innocent person, dedicated to the service of God, destined to be sacrificed, and to free mankind from sin. Alford argues that this idea of the removal or bearing of sin by a lamb could not originate from the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, for the Jewish mind traced no connection between that and the removal of sin; neither could the reference be to the sacrificial lamb generally, for the lamb was never used for a sin-offering, properly so called and known. Yet John ‘referred to some definite lamb, revealed by God, sent by God, pleasing to God, or in some meaning especially, of God.’ From John’s application to himself of 40 Isa. 3, we know that he was familiar with that prophet, and in chapter 53 Isaiah ‘compared the servant of God to a lamb brought to the slaughter, and said of him “He hath borne our griefs (in the LXX. beareth our sins)” . . . So that here, and here only, we have the connexion of which we are in search, between the lamb, and the bearing or taking away of sin’ (Alford).

Here was the person whom John had foretold. He points him out plainly: ‘This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is become before me: for he was before me (Gr. first in regard of me).’ The Authorised Version has, ‘Which is preferred before me: for he was before me.’ How is this to be understood: ‘before’ in time, or ‘before’ in rank? The Revisers have given the latter sense by using the words ‘is become before me,’ and ‘first in regard of me.’ Alford gives the same meaning: ‘Which taketh place before me: for he was before me.’ Von Tischendorf’s version runs: ‘A man that has advanced before me, for he was before me.’

John said also: ‘And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for that cause came I baptizing with (or, in) water.’ This requires some consideration. The mother of John and the mother of Jesus were kinswomen. It is scarcely supposable that there should have been no intercourse between the two families, especially as the mothers had met and lived together before the birth of either of the children. Neither can it be assumed that Zacharias or Elisabeth had not communicated to their son his foretold destiny.



2 Luke 76

In all probability the words of Zacharias had reached both the ears and heart of John: 'Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways.' But of his own knowledge John could say nothing. He knew both the man and his office, and in obedience to a divine impulse, he had gone forth as his forerunner; but his discernment went no further: he could prepare his way, he could point him out, he could recognize him as infinitely his superior, but it was not his own knowledge of the man which guided him: there were heights and depths in Jesus beyond the Baptist's power to fathom, so that even when he said 'Behold him!' he is 'the Lamb of God,' 'I came to reveal him,' he must needs add, 'I knew him not.' Ordinary social intercourse did not and could not disclose the claims and character of Jesus as the Messiah. John had said of him to the people, 'In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not:' Jesus was 'among them,' more or less intimate with some of them, but of his nature, his capacities, his aims, his divinely-appointed work and glorious destiny, they had no perception. Neither did John possess any innate, superior power of discernment. What he says of the multitude he says of himself: 'I knew him not.' Obviously the word 'knew' is used in the sense of 'recognized,' and refers, not to the person of Jesus, but to his Messiahship.

1 John 27

3 Mat. 14

15

The high opinion which John entertained of Jesus induced him to hesitate about baptizing one so much his superior. 'But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?' Jesus, however, urged the Baptist to perform on him the ceremony, on the ground that it was a becoming thing to submit to whatever was right in itself; and to that argument John yielded. 'But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it* (or, me) now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him.' Tischendorf renders: 'for so it becomes us to fulfil every duty;' but Young, who aims always at literality, retains the word 'righteousness.' The Authorised Version ran: 'Suffer *it to be so* now.' The Revisers insert only the word '*it*,' in italics, and '*me*,' in the margin. Young simply follows the original: 'Suffer now;' and the meaning is clear enough. One cannot but regret, occasionally, the introduction of italicized words when they are really not needed to mark the sense. It is satisfactory, however, to read in the Revisers' preface: 'Our tendency has been to diminish rather than to increase the amount of italic printing.'

1 Mark 9

3 Mat. 16

Baptism was by total or partial immersion in the river. Mark describes Jesus as 'baptized of John in (Gr. into) the Jordan.' It is noted that Jesus merely went into and immediately out of the water: 'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water.' Luke adds the fact that he was then seen in the attitude of prayer, and while so occupied a marvellous event occurred. Let us first take the description given of it, without either explanation or comment. The sky was cleft asunder, and from thence was seen to descend a living creature, shaped like a dove, which settled upon Jesus. Matthew, Mark and Luke agree upon the first point: Matthew says, 'the heavens were opened;' Mark describes them as 'rent asunder;' Luke's words are 'the heaven was opened.' John

says nothing of that, but the four evangelists are at one as to the form of the living creature: Matthew, 'descending as a dove, and coming upon him;' Mark, 'as a dove descending upon him;' Luke, 'descended in a bodily form as a dove upon him;' John, 'descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him.' Alford's comment on this is as follows: 'Descended not only in the manner of a dove, but in bodily shape (Luke): which I cannot understand in any but the literal sense, as the bodily shape of a dove.' Simultaneously with this miraculous phenomenon there occurred another: from the direction of the rift in the sky,—whether from the blue vault of heaven, or an intercepting cloud, does not appear—there issued the sound of a voice, which uttered intelligible words, laudatory of Jesus. 'And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:' 'And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased;' 'And a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased.' Young's version is, 'My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have delighted.' Matthew says: 'the heavens were opened unto him;' Mark: 'he saw the heavens rent asunder:' and in each case the pronoun refers back to John the Baptist, who is mentioned in the preceding verse. From this it must be inferred that the miracle rests upon his testimony, and the fourth evangelist confirms this: 'And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him.' This brings us to the explanation given concurrently by the evangelists. Matthew describes, 'the Spirit of God, descending as a dove;' Mark, 'the Spirit as a dove descending;' Luke, 'the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form as a dove.' This interpretation emanated from the Baptist. He repeated the observation, that his testimony as to Jesus being his successor and his superior was not based upon his own knowledge or judgment, but was made by direct revelation. He had been divinely told that a visible manifestation of the Spirit would be made, and that the person on whom John should see it descend and remain, would be the person who should pour upon men the Spirit, as the Baptist had poured water upon them. 'And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with (or, in) water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth with (or, in) the Holy Spirit.' When, therefore, the unexampled phenomenon occurred, John had no doubt as to its significance, and no hesitation in explaining it. And though we are not here told of the voice which accompanied the sign, the words of the Baptist indicate that he accepted the testimony, and proclaimed Jesus as God's Son, the Beloved. 'And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.' Let us pause here, and seek firm ground for our feet to stand on.

The word 'holy' has been already considered at pages 8 and 9, where the following conclusion was arrived at: 'Interpreting the term *holy* according to its use and signification in the Scriptures, it is evident that the *holy Spirit* denotes the Spirit specially devoted to the service of God.' We dare not move from this standing-point, without clear evidence of a higher theological meaning, which as yet

3 Mat. 16

1 Mark 10

3 Luke 22

1 John 32

3 Mat. 17

1 Mark 11

3 Luke 22

1 John 32

,, 32, 23

1 John 34



is wanting. 'Holy' means consecrated, set apart, devoted; and the very application of that word to the Spirit, forbids the idea of absolute supremacy, of equality with the Supreme.

1 Luke 35 The import of the expression 'Son of God' also demands careful consideration. It was applied by the angel to the promised son of the virgin, and the only inference to be drawn from that passage was that it referred to the Divine power manifested in the child's birth, and his consequent dedication as a 'holy' or consecrated thing, to God. 'Wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called Holy, the Son of God.'

4 Ex. 22 Now, when Jesus is attested by a voice from heaven to be 'the Son of God,' what must the term import in Jewish ears? It does not necessarily imply Divinity, because it had been applied to the whole Jewish people: 'Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my firstborn.' Acceptable to God, beloved of God: we may not, on the evidence yet before us, stretch the meaning of the words beyond that.

1 John 6 But we are not without further evidence, which must now be considered. The fourth evangelist has been careful to give us, in his narrative of events, the exact words of the Baptist, which we have been considering. But in his preface to the narrative he goes much further. He first tells us that John came with a divine commission. 'There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.' The object of his mission was to bear testimony to that 'light' of which the evangelist had been speaking, and thereby to produce a general belief in him. 'The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.' We have already seen (pages 1—3) that the evangelist attributed to this 'Word' or 'Life' the attributes of personality, creative power and Deity. The Baptist himself had no claim to innate light, neither was it his to disseminate, but he came to point men to the essential source of light. 'He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.' A new and true luminary for mankind was about to come,—not, as other lights, to shine above the world,—but to come into the world. 'There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world. (Or, the true light, which lighteth every man was coming,—or, every man as he cometh—into the world).' A marvellous advent, indeed! He was the Maker of the world, and the Giver of life to man, and yet, being come into the world, he was not recognized. 'He was in the world, and the world was made by (or, through) him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own (Gr. his own things), and they that were his own received him not.' Alford says, 'It is impossible to express this verse (11) in terse and short English. In the original, the first *his own* is neuter—his own things, or possessions: the second, masculine, his own people.' Young translates, 'To his own things he came, and his own people received him not.' The Revised Version brings out this distinction, which the Authorised Version did not. Tischendorf's rendering is peculiar: 'He came unto his own home, and his people received him not.'

But the rejection of him, although general, was not universal. Some received him, and in consequence were endowed by him with a new power. The capabilities of their nature were enlarged, enabling them to become participators in the divine nature. 'But as many as

received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God.' Alford says of this word 'right': 'The word means, not merely capability, still less privilege or prerogative, but power.' Young renders it 'power,' as in the Authorised Version; Tischendorf 'authority.'

The means and evidence of thus receiving him, was faith: a conviction that he was what he was set forth as being, a recognition of the claims and powers which his name implied. That is what we should understand to be the meaning of belief 'in the name' of a king, or a judge, or a teacher. 'Even to them that believe in his name.' And <sup>1 John 12</sup> this new relationship of 'children of God,' is not in name only, a mere adoption, but a renovation, transformation, growth, and development of Being: a new birth, wrought out by divine power. 'Which were 13 born (or, begotten), not of blood (Gr. bloods), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' 'The Word,' that divine personality which existed 'in the beginning,' and through whom all things were made, assumed a fleshly form, and dwelt among 1, 2 men. 'And the Word became flesh, and dwelt (Gr. tabernacled) among us.' 14

The evangelist gives no grounds for his making, or our accepting, this stupendous statement; but he gives his own testimony with respect to the life and career on earth of this incarnate Word. He, with others, saw in him certain manifestations of glory, excelling anything granted to other men: '(And we beheld his glory, glory as of 14 the only begotten from the Father)(or, an only begotten from a father).' The glory given by a father to the son whom he exalts above others, must consist in special marks of authority, influence and distinction. Such were manifested in him: there abounded in him gifts of excellency and wisdom: 'Full of grace and truth.' Alford remarks: 14 'The words "full of grace and truth" belong probably to the last words, "the only-begotten of the Father," and there is no need of a parenthesis, as in A. V.' The Revisers, however, have retained the parenthesis; Tischendorf and Young omit it. On this verse Alford has the following note: 'On the term "as," Chrysostom remarks that "it is not a word of mere likeness, or comparison, but of confirmation, and unquestionable endowment: as if he had said, We saw glory such as became, and such as was likely would be possessed by, the only begotten and genuine Son of God the King of all."' That is to take the word 'Father' as applying to God, and not to a man as in the marginal reading 'a father.' But Young renders, as in the margin, 'a father,' and the observation of Chrysostom itself shows that the obvious sense of 'as' is that of a comparison, only he seeks to add something, saying, 'it is not a word of mere likeness or comparison.' If the comparison is to an earthly father, it is necessary to enquire as to the meaning of the term 'only begotten.' If the son of God is alluded to, the expression 'only begotten' puts him into comparison with others, who are begotten 'children of God,' (v. 12 13), and so it becomes equally necessary to understand the term.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read: 'By faith Abraham, being <sup>11 Heb. 17</sup> tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.' The word 'son,' which the Revisers have put in italics, is an unnecessary addition: Young and Tischendorf omit it. Now we know, as the writer to the Hebrews

well knew, that Abraham had another son, who was born before Isaac. It is obvious, therefore, that the term 'only begotten' does not signify either 'unique' or 'first born,' in New Testament usage. Neither does the expression 'only son,' in the Old Testament: 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac:' though Abraham had and loved another son, Ishmael. The words, 'thy son, thine only son,' are repeated in verse 16. It is clear, therefore, that the term 'only begotten' denotes precedence: 'in Isaac shall thy seed be called.' This recognized peculiarity of expression, dating back to the earliest times, possibly had its origin in the custom of framing genealogies: the line of descent was handed down through one son *only*, to whom the word 'begotten' was applied. 'Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob.' This son was, of course, the recognized head of the family, next to the father himself; and so it would naturally come to pass that the style 'only begotten' would be understood to mean 'first in rank.' It would seem that the word 'only,' in other connections, sometimes bore the same meaning, 'chiefly,' as in the passage, 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.'

The evangelist proceeds to add to his own testimony that of the Baptist. This was given publicly and emphatically. He had foretold his own decline as a teacher, in comparison with one who would supersede him, and whom he now indicates. 'John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me.' Young renders, 'hath come before me;' the Authorised Version has, 'is preferred before me;' Tischendorf 'has advanced before me;' Alford, 'taketh place before me,' and he explains that in the original "it is the same word as that rendered "hath been made" in verse 3: "hath come to be, is constituted."

The evangelist now refers back to his own words, 'full of grace and truth,' and says that out of that fulness they received grace in constant increase. 'For out of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace.' Tischendorf has, 'even grace for grace.' Young renders, 'and grace over-against grace.' Alford explains: 'The preposition rendered "for" (instead of) is properly used of anything which supersedes another, or occupies its place. . . . Thus also we have received "grace for grace," continual accessions of grace; new grace coming upon and superseding the former.'

Up to this point the evangelist has spoken, in loftiest terms, of this divine 'Word'; in passing, he quoted the saying of the Baptist, whose successor is thus identified with the 'Word'; now he puts it plainly that the 'Word' is Jesus Christ. And he places him in contrast with and above the great Jewish law-giver, Moses. 'For the law was given by (or, through) Moses: grace and truth came by (or, through) Jesus Christ.' The gift by Moses was a code of laws held out for man's obedience; the revelation by Jesus Christ was of an excellency and wisdom of mind and character developed for man's imitation. More than this: the manifestation of Jesus was the clearest manifestation of God which has been granted to man. No one has ever seen God; man's soul thirsts for God; his heart and his flesh cry out for the living God; but the Being we seek and adore is the Invisible God. At last came One who 'was in the beginning with God,' who 'was God,' nearest and dearest to the Supreme, and who therefore may be called, as in the margin of verse 18, 'the only-



begotten God,' and spoken of, to use a phrase current with the Jews, as 'in the bosom' of God, Son with Father, none above and none between. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son (many very ancient copies read God the only-begotten) which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.' Young omits the 'him,' which is italicized by the Revisers, and Young, Tischendorf and Alford omit 'hath' before 'declared.'

16 Luke 22  
1 John 18

This verse (18) brings to an end the Evangelist's introduction to his gospel. Again the question presses: Whence did he obtain these marvellous ideas? Not from the Baptist, for only a few words of his are introduced (verse 15) by way of confirmation, and 'the witness of John' the Baptist is given by itself (vv. 19—37). The narrative itself must be searched closely for any grounds it may afford for these mysterious and positive teachings.

The simplicity of Mark's introduction stands out in strong contrast to that of John. 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.' The Revisers insert the note: 'Some ancient authorities omit *the Son of God*.' The original reading of the Sinaitic MS. omitted the words, which were introduced by a later hand. Tischendorf discards them, and renders the verse, 'Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.'

1 Mark 1

The narrative of the fourth Evangelist with respect to the testimony of the Baptist and the introduction of Jesus to the notice of men is extremely vivid. We have evidently the account of an eye-witness, who is careful in point of chronology. Having related the conversation of the Baptist with the priests and Levites, he tells something which occurred 'on the morrow.' Now again he observes that, one day only having intervened, John was standing with two disciples, saw Jesus walking, and repeated the expression which on the previous day he had applied to him. 'Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples: and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God.' This peculiar observation naturally directed the attention of the two disciples towards the person referred to. Urged by a feeling of respectful curiosity, they followed Jesus. 'And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.' Presently he turned round, saw that they had been walking behind him, and enquired with what object. 'And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?' Their answer indicated that they regarded him in the light of a Teacher, and in that capacity desired to visit him. 'And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master (or, Teacher) where abidest thou?' Jesus courteously invited them to come to his home at once. 'He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see.' They went, therefore, to see; and being there, they spent the rest of the day in his company. 'They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day.' The Evangelist explains: 'It was about the tenth hour.' Alford decides that this means '4 P.M., according to the Jewish reckoning; not, as some have thought, 10 A.M., according to that of the Romans. Our Evangelist appears always to reckon according to the Jewish method, see ch. iv. 6, 52; xix. 14.'

1 John 3:5, 36

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In this verse three alterations have been made, for which we are

indebted to the carefulness of the Revisers. 'Come and see' is now 'Come, and ye shall see,' according to the Vatican rendering, which is adopted also by Tischendorf. 'They came and saw' is now, 'they came therefore and saw,' in accordance with the two oldest MSS. The word 'for' is now omitted before 'it was about,' on the same authority.

1 John 40

One of the two persons who were induced by the Baptist's words to follow Jesus, was named Andrew, brother to Simon Peter. 'One of the two that heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.' Young omits the italicised word *speak*, without which the meaning is sufficiently plain. Tischendorf's rendering is peculiar, and conveys a different sense: 'One of the two who heard it from John and them that followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.'

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Andrew sought out his brother, and communicated to him the startling news that they had discovered the expected Messiah of the Jews. 'He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him. We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ) (that is, Anointed).' His next step was to introduce Peter to him.

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'He brought him unto Jesus.' Jesus gazed upon his face, and then, as though reading thereby the depths of his character, told him that in lieu of his family name, he should be known as the 'Rock.'

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'Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John (Gr. Joanes: called in Mat. xvi. 17, Jonah): thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter) (that is, Rock or Stone).' An intimation such as that is sufficiently marvellous, without supposing that the name of Simon had not been mentioned to Jesus. The narrative gives no warrant for this paraphrase of Stier: 'I know who and what thou art from thy birth to thy present coming to me.' If, on the one hand, we determine to interpret these gospel records as they stand, without shrinking from the miraculous and inexplicable, we must be careful, on the other, not to stretch their plain meaning by introducing doctrines, orthodox or otherwise, into the text.

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The evangelist continues the daily history. The next day Jesus determined to go to Galilee: it is not said to return there, to visit or to live there, but 'to go forth into Galilee.' The expression conveys the idea of a missionary tour. Such an intention on the part of Jesus was further indicated by his seeking out a person known to him, and desiring him to become one of his 'followers.' All this accords with the recognition of him as a 'Teacher' (verse 38). 'On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me.' This was not a request to him to forsake his own neighbourhood and connections,

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but to return to them: for Philip, as well as Andrew and Peter, came from Galilee, and had been fellow-citizens in Bethsaida. 'Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.' Not only did Philip obey the call of Jesus, but he went in search of another to bear him company. To Nathanael he communicated his conviction that they had discovered the Messiah, who had been fore-

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told by Moses and the Prophets. 'Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.' And he speaks of him as one whom



Nathanael would at once identify by the mention of his name and dwelling-place : 'Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' It must be inferred that the miraculous birth of Jesus, as related by Matthew and Luke, was not then known to these men. No hint is given anywhere that it had been proclaimed by Mary or her husband. For thirty years he had been known as the son of Joseph ; many of those who might have learnt something of the marvels attending his birth had passed away from earth ; therefore to find him spoken of as Joseph's son is not strange, but most natural. 1 John 45

Nathanael's experiences of the moral condition of Nazareth were not, it would seem, satisfactory. His first feeling was one of doubt whether anything good could be expected from that quarter. 'And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?' Young's rendering is stronger : 'Out of Nazareth is any good thing able to be ?' Let him come and judge for himself, was the wise reply. 'Philip saith unto him, Come and see.' The first words of Jesus when he caught sight of Nathanael, showed an insight into his character, expressed by the observation that here was a true and guileless Israelite. 'Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile !' Nathanael was the more surprised at this because Jesus had not had any previous acquaintance with him, and he enquired how this knowledge of him had been obtained. 'Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me ?' The answer of Jesus was not a little startling : he had seen Nathanael before Philip had found him, and his eye had pierced his retirement beneath the shade of a certain fig-tree. 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.' That reply brought conviction to the mind of Nathanael : at once he accepted Jesus, not only as a Teacher, but as the Son of God, and King of Israel. 'Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God ; thou art King of Israel.' The import of the term 'the Son of God' has been already considered. The employment of it here by Nathanael, especially between the words Teacher and King, may fairly be taken to indicate that it had in Jewish ears a definite sense, and that it is not to be strained, as it so often is by us, to denote not only Divinity, but equality and oneness with the supreme God. Indeed, the conclusion again forces itself upon us, that the term was taken, generally, to denote the Messiah. We have found the Messiah, said Philip. Nathanael doubted, but was at once led to acknowledge the truth of Philip's assertion : Thou *art* Messiah (the Son of God), thou *art* the King of Israel. Alford takes this view : 'Thou art the Messiah ;' and he refers to 2 Ps. 7 : 11 John 27, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, *even* he that cometh into the world ;' 16 Mat. 16, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ;' 22 Luke 67, 70, 'If thou art the Christ tell us . . . Art thou then the Son of God ?' 46  
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With respect to the words of Jesus, 'When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee,' it is obvious that Nathanael considered the knowledge of Jesus on the point supernatural, although we cannot expect to understand the connection traced by the mind of Nathanael between the reply of Jesus and his claim to the Messiahship. We may be sure, however, that it was not the mere exhibition of super-

5 ii Kings  
25, 26

1 John 50

natural knowledge which justified Nathanael's conclusion, for the same power of second-sight had been exhibited by Elisha with respect to Gehazi. And Jesus assured Nathanael that such a power of vision could in many ways be surpassed, and that by Nathanael himself. 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.' Young renders: 'Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, thou believest;' and Alford observes, 'There is no *need* to understand our Lord's reply as a question; it may be, Thou believest. The question is perhaps most natural here.'

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Jesus asserted, further, that not only Nathanael but others (for the 'thou shalt see' is changed to 'ye shall see') would see the mysteries of the heavenly world revealed, and a stream of angelic beings going to and fro between mankind and heaven. Here as elsewhere Young renders the word 'angels,' 'messengers.' Who shall limit the knowledge which may be thus conveyed to mankind? 'And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.' The Revisers have omitted 'hereafter' before 'ye shall see,' following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. and many of the oldest authorities.

1 Mat. 1

3 Luke 23

„ 34-38

Two of the evangelists have given pedigrees of Jesus. That of Matthew is headed: 'The book of the generation (or, genealogy) of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.' That of Luke is introduced by the words: 'And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph.' Matthew traces downwards; Luke upwards. Comparing the two, let us take the order adopted by Matthew. Luke goes back to Adam, who being the first man, is said to be 'of God.' His list of names up to Abraham is as follows: 1 Adam, 2 Seth, 3 Enos, 4 Cainan, 5 Mahalaleel, 6 Jared, 7 Enoch, 8 Methuselah, 9 Lamech, 10 Noah, 11 Shem, 12 Arphaxed, 13 Cainan, 14 Shelah, 15 Eber, 16 Peleg, 17 Reu, 18 Serug, 19 Nahor, 20 Terah, 21 Abraham. The first ten of these names correspond exactly with the genealogy in 5 Gen. 1—32. The names numbered 11 to 21 correspond with the genealogy of Shem in 11 Gen. 10—26, except that number 13, 'Cainan,' does not there appear. On this, Alford has the following note: 'This name does not exist in our present Hebrew text, but in the LXX, Gen. x. 24; xi. 12, 13, and furnishes a curious instance of one of two things—either (1) the corruption of our present Hebrew text in these chronological passages; or (2) the incorrectness of the LXX, and notwithstanding that, the high reputation which it had obtained in so short a time. Lightfoot holds the latter alternative: but I own I think the former more probable.'

3 Luke 32, 33

1 Mat. 2-6

3 Luke 24-32

The names proceed as follows: 21 Abraham, 22 Isaac, 23 Jacob, 24 Judah, 25 Perez, 26 Hezron, 27 Arni (or, Ram), 28 Amminadab, 29 Nahshon, 30 Salmon, 31 Boaz, 32 Obed, 33 Jesse, 34 David. These fourteen names (21 to 34) agree with the list given by Matthew.

Luke completes his list thus: 34 David, 35 Nathan, 36 Mattathah, 37 Menna, 38 Melea, 39 Eliakim, 40 Jonam, 41 Joseph, 42 Judas,

43 Symeon, 44 Levi, 45 Matthat, 46 Jorim, 47 Eliezer, 48 Jesus, 49 Er, 50 Elmadam, 51 Cosam, 52 Addi, 53 Melchi, 54 Neri, 55 Shealtiel, 56 Zernbbabel, 57 Rhesa, 58 Joanan, 59 Joda, 60 Josech, 61 Semein, 62 Mattathias, 63 Maath, 64 Naggai, 65 Eshi, 66 Nahum, 67 Amos, 68 Mattathias, 69 Joseph, 70 Jannai, 71 Melchi, 72 Levi, 73 Matthat, 74 Heli, 75 Joseph, 76 Jesus.

Between the names numbered 35 to 76 and those recorded by Matthew there is no agreement whatever, the descent being traced by Matthew through the kingly line, and by Luke in another direction. Matthew's list is as follows: '34 David, 35 Solomon, 36 Rehoboam, 37 Abijah, 38 Asa, 39 Jehoshaphat, 40 Joram, 41 Uziah, 42 Jotham, 43 Ahaz, 44 Hezekiah, 45 Manasseh, 46 Amon, 47 Josiah, 48 Jechoniah, 49 Shealtiel, 50 Zernbbabel, 51 Abiud, 52 Eliakim, 53 Azor, 54 Sadoc, 55 Achim, 56 Eliud, 57 Eleazar, 58 Matthan, 59 Jacob, 60 'Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.' The difference between these two lists arises from Luke taking one son of David—Nathan, and Matthew another son of David—Solomon. <sup>1 Mat. 6-16</sup>

But there is a discrepancy between these pedigrees at the most important point. According to Luke, the father of Joseph was Heli; according to Matthew, he was Jacob. If in this point only the genealogies differed, the following remark of Alford might be accepted as a solution: 'It was common among the Jews for the same man to bear different names; how do we know how often this may occur among the immediate progenitors of Joseph? The marriage of a brother with a brother's wife to raise up seed (which then might be accounted to either husband) was common; how do we know how often this may have contributed to produce variations in the terms of a genealogy?' But we must not lose sight of the fact that a divergence between these pedigrees occurs at the time of David. Luke traces downwards from his son Nathan, and Matthew from his son Solomon. Therefore Joseph the son of Heli (traced through the line of Nathan) cannot be identical with Joseph the son of Matthan (traced through the line of Solomon). Therefore the above suggestions of Alford do not bear on the question; yet apart from them he leaves the matter as an unsolved problem, saying: 'It is quite beyond the purpose of the present Commentary to attempt to reconcile the two. It has never yet been accomplished; and every endeavour to do it has violated either ingenuousness or common sense.'

Yet as soon as the fact is faced that the Joseph of Heli was not, could not have been, the Joseph of Jacob, we find ourselves in a position to suggest a solution of the difficulty. Take the pedigree of Luke as that of Joseph's family. Matthew's object was to trace the descent of Jesus through the royal line up to David. How does he manage that? By tracing down to the last descendant of the royal line—Jacob—and then introducing Joseph, expressly as being 'the husband of Mary.' In that capacity, solely as occupying that position, is he there mentioned. Alford observes that the 'real Davidical descent' of Jesus 'must be solely derived through his mother.' Surely Matthew did not forget that, and, remembering it, he introduced the name of Mary into his genealogy, which is in fact that of Mary, the genealogy of Luke being that of Joseph. Luke professes



to give no more than the *supposititious* pedigree of Jesus,—‘being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph.’ Matthew counts the generations ‘unto the Christ,’ as dealing with an *actual* pedigree. Alford says: ‘The attempts of many to make it appear that the genealogy (of Luke) is that of Mary, reading “the son (as supposed of Joseph, but in reality) of Heli, &c.,” are, as Meyer has shown, quite unsuccessful: see Dr. Mill’s vindication of the genealogies, p. 180 ff. for the history of this opinion.’ Admitting, then, that the genealogy of Luke cannot be that of Mary, and that the genealogy of Matthew, being traced from David through a different line, cannot possibly be the same and end with the same descendant as that of Luke, are we not forced to the conclusion that Matthew’s is that of the family of Mary? He himself tells us that Jesus was the son of Mary only. How could he possibly have set himself to compile a pedigree tracing the royal descent of Jesus through the man who, he expressly declares, was *not* his father. We do not ‘violate either ingenuousness or common sense’ in assuming that Matthew’s genealogy is that of Mary, and that either some error has crept into the last few words of it, or that their apparent sense must be in some way modified. ‘Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus.’ A mere transposition of the words would suffice: ‘Jacob begat Mary of Joseph (the husband), of whom was born Jesus.’ In connection with the birth of Jesus the son of Mary, the name of Joseph the husband can only have been inserted by way of parenthesis.

There are some other points of doubt and difficulty in connection with Matthew’s genealogy. Verse 8 of chapter 1 states: ‘Joram begat Uzziah.’ A reference to 3 i. Chr. 11, 12, shows that three generations, all Kings, are omitted, namely Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah. Verse 11 says: ‘Josiah begat Jechoniah,’ which omits Eliakim son of Josiah and father of Jechoniah. But Alford observes: ‘If we compare 1 Chr. III. 16, with 2 Kings XXIV. 17, we can hardly fail to see that there is some confusion in the records of Josiah’s family.’ To some extent Matthew’s genealogy seems to be erroneous. He appears to have been unconscious of any omission therein, for he did not scruple to divide the pedigree into three periods, each containing fourteen generations, as indicated by him. There is no just ground for the suggestion of Alford that the erasion of the three Kings was ‘probably made for convenience, in order to square the numbers of the different portions of the genealogies.’

Matthew summarises his list thus: ‘So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away (or, removal) to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away (or, removal) to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations.’ This event he had noted: ‘Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon. And after the carrying away to Babylon, Jechoniah begat Shealtiel.’ Alford remarks: ‘If we carefully observe Matthew’s arrangement, we shall have no difficulty in completing the three “fourteens.” For the first is from Abraham to David, of course inclusive. The second from David (again inclusive) to the migration, which gives no name, as before, to be included in both the second and third periods, but which is mentioned simultaneously with the begetting of Jechonias, leaving him for the third

1 Mat. 25

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,, 11, 12



period. This last, then, takes in from Jechonias to Jesus Christ inclusive.'

We have now to consider the remarkable account given by three of the evangelists of the temptation of Jesus. This extended over a period of forty days, and appears to have commenced immediately after his reception of baptism at the hands of John, for Mark uses the word 'straightway,' Matthew says 'then,' and Luke explains that it was when Jesus 'returned from the Jordan.' Comparing this with John's gospel, it follows that the deputation to the Baptist from the priests at Jerusalem was some time after the baptism of Jesus; not, indeed, until the forty days had expired; for 'on the morrow' <sup>1 John 29</sup> after receiving the deputation, John again saw 'Jesus coming unto him,' pointed him out, and testified to the fact which he had previously witnessed: 'I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven.' <sup>32</sup> Alford opposes 'those who wish to introduce the Temptation between verses 28 and 29' of John's first chapter. Immediately after the baptism Jesus was absent for about six weeks, at the least; meantime the deputation arrived, and the following day Jesus again showed himself to the Baptist.

The three evangelists agree in the statement that Jesus was impelled, by an overpowering spiritual influence, to withdraw himself from men and seek retirement in the wilderness. Matthew says: 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.' Mark: <sup>4 Mat. 1</sup> 'And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness.' <sup>1 Mark 12</sup> Luke: 'And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, <sup>4 Luke 1</sup> and was led by (or, in) the Spirit in the wilderness.' They agree also in the fact that he was there tempted by the devil. Matthew takes upon himself to say that he was led there for that very purpose: 'to be tempted of the Devil.' Mark: 'tempted of Satan.' Luke: <sup>4 Mat. 1</sup> 'being tempted of the Devil.' Young renders 'Satan,' in Mark, 'the Adversary.' <sup>1 Mark 13</sup> They agree also that the temptation lasted forty days. <sup>4 Luke 1</sup> Matthew and Luke add that during that period Jesus was entirely without food, and on the completion of the fast suffered the pangs of hunger. Matthew: 'And when he had fasted forty days and forty <sup>4 Mat. 2</sup> nights, he afterward hungered.' Mark: 'And he was in the wild- <sup>1 Mark 13</sup> ness forty days.' Luke: 'And he did eat nothing in those days: <sup>4 Luke 2</sup> and when they were completed, he hungered.' Mark alone states: 'And he was with the wild beasts.'

Luke describes the first temptation as follows: 'And the devil <sup>1 Mark 13</sup> said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that <sup>4 Luke 3</sup> it become bread (or, a loaf).' Matthew's account is similar: 'And <sup>4 Mat. 3</sup> the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread (or, loaves).' A Being is here introduced called 'devil' and 'tempter.' He is represented as coming, and speaking, which precludes the idea that it was a mere suggestion arising in the mind of the tempted One. 'And Jesus <sup>4 Luke 4</sup> answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.' The allusion appears to be to 8 Den. 3: 'And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.' The Authorised Version has, in italics, 'word' instead of 'thing.' Young

4 Mat. 4

has 'produce;' the French Version, 'tout ce qui sort,' 'all that which proceeds.' Matthew inserts the latter portion of this text into the reply of Jesus: 'But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

Taking together the words of the Tempter, the reply of Jesus, and the quotation, we may be able to grasp the incidence of the temptation. Jesus having been led or driven by the Spirit into the desert, occupied the same position there as the Israelites, and to him equally applied the words, 'He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger.' But as yet he had received no miraculous supply, as of manna. The devil urged him not to wait for anything of the kind, but, relying upon his sonship to God, to command a stone to be transformed into a loaf. Had Jesus the power, or not, to work such a miracle? It is not for us to say: but the command itself, whether effectual or not, would have been an overstepping of the natural laws under which man lives. To attempt that, on his own behalf, Jesus emphatically refused. Not by any word proceeding out of his own mouth would his life be sustained: he would wait for God's word. It was no question of depending upon the ordinary laws of Providence. The position then occupied by Jesus was outside common human experiences. He had been guided by a supernatural impulse away from the haunts of men, to a place where God's power alone must be looked to for the supply of those natural cravings which, after slumbering forty days, were now again rising up within him. He must learn the lesson which Israel learnt in the foodless wilderness. God was leading him, and suffering him to hunger. It was for God, not for him, to speak the word which would supply his need. On that ground, the suggestion of the Tempter was repelled.

4 Luke 9-11

The evangelists represent Jesus as being for the time, with respect to his body, under the guidance of the devil. Luke describes the next temptation thus: 'And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle (Gr. wing) of the temple and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee to guard thee, and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.'

4 Mat. 5, 6

Matthew's account is similar, except that he describes Jesus as 'taken into the holy city' instead of 'led to Jerusalem,' and he omits in the quotation the words 'to guard thee,' and the words 'from hence' after 'cast thyself down.' The quotation is from 91 Ps. 11, 12.

4 Luke 12

4 Mat. 7

This temptation was exactly the reverse of the first one. There Jesus was urged to put forth his own power, instead of submitting himself and waiting for an exhibition of God's power. Here he is bidden to forsake his natural standing-point and throw himself boldly into space, relying upon a divine promise of supernatural support. In reply, Jesus quoted another scripture, which forbade man to tempt Providence. 'And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' The words occur in 6 Deu. 16: 'Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.' The circumstance is thus described in 17 Ex. 7: 'And he called the name of the place Massah (that is, Tempting, or

Proving), and Meribah (that is, Chiding, or Strife), because of the striving of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?' The quotation of the passage by Jesus was most apposite. An attempt on his part to fly through the air would have been equivalent to saying, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?' In quoting from the Psalmist, the devil had omitted the words 'in all thy ways.' Jesus was not unmindful of them; he would choose no way of deliverance except under God's guidance. The suggestion of the Tempter was no way for him to follow.

But the actual scope of the temptation, we are at some loss to understand. On what feeling or impulse in the breast of Jesus did the devil rely, when he suggested the mad leap through the air? Was the body so wholly within the Tempter's clutch that any mode of escape would be welcome? The narrative is silent both as to the reasons and lessons connected with its mysterious incidents.

In both temptations the basis is laid in the words, 'If thou art the Son of God.' The use of the definite article 'the' in the Authorised and Revised Versions seems to restrict the application of that term to Jesus. But Tischendorf renders, 'If thou art God's Son.' Young also, following the original, omits the article in three places, 'If Son thou art of God,' but in 4 Luke 9 he inserts it, where Tischendorf and others, on the authority of ancient MSS., omit it. The nature of the answers given by Jesus indicates that he occupied only the ground which might be taken by any ordinary man cognizant of the Jewish scriptures as a law binding upon himself. What they commanded, he must do; what they forbade, he must avoid. Such replies would have been inconsequential and irrelevant if the temptations had been directed against Jesus as challenges to a Being superior, as 'Son of God,' to other men.

The next temptation is thus described by Matthew: 'Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' Luke's account begins in the Authorised Version as follows: 'And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.' The word 'exceeding' is omitted before 'high mountain.' The Revised Version, following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., omits all mention of a mountain, and gives the passage thus: 'And he led him up, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world (Gr. the inhabited earth) in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine.' Luke's account is substantially the same as Matthew's, but a few important touches are added: Luke says the vision occupied only 'a moment of time;' he represents the offer to Jesus as being not only visible 'glory,' but 'authority;' he puts into the devil's mouth the words, 'it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.'

Putting the two narratives together, their import appears to be as follows. Jesus is represented as still in the grasp of the Tempter,

carried and poised by him in some mysterious way high above the earth, and endowed with a power of vision to gaze from that lofty position upon the great cities of the world. Then the devil dilated not only upon the external signs of magnificence, palaces and hosts armed for war, but also upon the powers of rulership of which these things were the external manifestation. If Jesus cared not for the 'glory,' at least he must for the 'authority.' Let him take it to himself; let him sway mankind according to his will; no restriction should be placed upon him, and no limit to the exercise of his dominion: 'it shall all be thine.' Had we Matthew's account only, the appeal might have been regarded as directed merely to the instincts of sensuousness and ambition, to the love of pomp and display. But Luke brings out the idea of influence, authority. Did the devil not know that he was tempting a man who had been led to the desert by the Spirit; who had plans and yearnings for the welfare of mankind? Jesus need not change his desires or purposes. Here, at the opening of his career, he might secure at once his hold upon men. What might he not be able to effect during his life? What an influence, down to remotest ages, might not be imparted to the world by one generation of wise, unimpeded, righteous rule? The secret spring of all this power lay open to the devil's touch; the motives which govern men had long been his to urge and wield; success waited on his will and bidding, and they who gained supremacy were his emissaries and favorites. Let Jesus take the upper hand, replace the present rulers by ministers subject to his own supremacy, and mould all things to his will.

All this might be; but only in one way, and upon one condition. The gift must be taken with an acknowledgment of the Giver. A single act of homage would suffice; a recognition of the devil's lordship, were it but a simple bowing of the knee: 'If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine.'

The offer was rejected. It was not with Jesus a question of possibility or expediency, but of duty. The invitation clashed with the divine command. <sup>4</sup> Luke 8, 9. 'And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' Matthew puts into the reply words of defiant scorn: <sup>4</sup> Mat. 10. 'Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' The Revisers, following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., have omitted from Luke's account the words, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' which are in the Authorised Version.

The exact words quoted by Jesus are not found. Commentators refer them to Deu. vi. 13, and x. 20. The thorough knowledge of Scripture on the part of Jesus proves his diligent study of it, a study <sup>2</sup> Luke 42, 46 which we know he had entered upon with enthusiasm eighteen years <sup>3</sup> Luke 23 before.

Mark's account summarises the temptation in three sentences: <sup>1</sup> Mark 13. 'And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.' Alford observes: 'Perhaps the being with the beasts may point to one form of temptation, viz., that of terror, which was practised on Him.' There is no good ground for this idea. Tischendorf and Young omit the word 'wild,' so that the statement amounts only to



this: that he was far removed from men, in the desert, where only the animals resorted, and was there at length supplied miraculously with food, which could not come to him in any other way. Matthew testifies to the same effect: 'Then the devil leaveth him; and behold <sup>4 Mat. 11</sup> angels came and ministered unto him.' Luke merely describes the departure of the Tempter, and adds that it was only for a time. 'And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed <sup>4 Luke 13</sup> from him for (or, until) a season.'

The whole narrative of the temptation lies outside the range of human experiences. From first to last, everything about it is mysterious, supernatural: the overpowering spiritual impulse which drove Jesus to the desert; the miraculous fast of nearly six weeks; the submission of a man so young to that state of solitude and privation; the spiritual influences arrayed against him; the mysterious personality of the devil; the strange power he exercised over the body of Jesus; the object aimed at in plying him with temptations; their peculiar character; the leverage sought to be obtained by the devil quoting Scripture to his purpose; the calm confidence with which every assault was beaten back by an appeal to the written word of God; the strangeness of the suggestion that stones might be turned to bread; the still stranger invitation to leap from a tower to the ground; the carrying of Jesus to a position in mid air, from which, with the swiftness of a lightning-flash, a vision of every land was given him; the subtlety with which he was invited to assume the reins of universal power; the assertion of the devil that it was his to hold and to bestow; the one act of fealty on which the gift was made conditional; the dignified scorn with which the Tempter was repulsed; the ministration at last of angelic Beings: the whole account is above and beyond us, weird, unearthly, and yet so lucid, so majestic, so passionless, so fascinating!

We must needs pause to enquire on what foundation a narrative so unprecedented is supported. One of the evils attaching to the old and yet lingering theories of the Inspiration of Scripture, is the readiness with which everything it contains is accepted as a matter of course, without the least attempt at careful investigation or judicious criticism. Men happen to have read the passage that 'holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' with other passages of a kindred import, all true and full of solemn meaning, but not to be understood apart from the context, nor with it apart from earnest thought, and least of all when jumbled up together and quoted as proofs of a clear-cut dogma which probably never entered the minds of those with whom the texts originated. In what way does the doctrine of inspiration bear on the narrative of the Temptation? Is it to be assumed that Matthew, Mark and Luke were equally inspired: Matthew, to say that the journey of Jesus to the wilderness was undertaken for the express purpose of being tempted; Mark and Luke, to state merely the fact that he was tempted: Mark, so to word his narrative as to leave it somewhat doubtful whether the temptation did or did not last throughout the forty days; Mark, to leave out all the details given by the other two evangelists; Matthew and Luke, to vary the order in which the temptations happened; and John, shall we say, equally inspired when he forebore any allusion whatever to the temptation? To what

straits in logic, to what absurdities in argument, does the common notion of inspiration lead! In the name of truth and common sense, let us seek some better foundation than that.

We must apply to this narrative the ordinary rules for judging of historical events. There were but two actors in the scene: Jesus and the Tempter. From one of them the basis of the description must have been received, for there were no spectators. Jesus must first have related the events; when or to whom, no hint is given. If to several persons, somewhat different versions would naturally arise, according to their differences in memory and comprehension. Mark merely indicates, as it were, in passing, the tradition of the temptation which was in existence. Between Matthew and Luke there is a substantial agreement, almost more than could have been expected in the relation of occurrences so mysterious and incomprehensible. We know that Luke was a careful compiler, and that this must have been one of the 'things most surely believed,' or, as the Revisers render it, 'fully established' among Christians.

1 Luke 1

On the assumption of the narrative emanating from Jesus, is there anything connected with it which can be deemed derogatory to his character? Is it egotistical, self-laudatory, and so at variance with what we know of Jesus? By no means. We can imagine him relating it to some dear friend, under the conviction that such experiences would prove to him and others not only interesting but profitable. Put into the first person, the disclosure would be somewhat in this form: 'Constrained by the spiritual influence which fell upon me at baptism, I sought retirement from all human intercourse. My steps were directed to the desert, and there for forty days I dwelt, with the untamed animals for my only companions. No sense of want came to me during that time, but afterwards I began to hunger. Then appeared to me an adversary, a demon, tempting me. He challenged me to show my relationship to God by bidding a stone transform itself into a loaf. But I answered him that God had taught us there were other means of life than bread, and that in common with all mankind it was for me to live by His word alone. Next, under the demon's influence, I found myself standing on the pinnacle of the temple, and urged by him to throw myself down, forasmuch as I was near and dear to God, and He had promised the guardianship of angels to keep the feet of His saints. But to that I answered that man's plainly-revealed duty was to refrain from claiming any special divine interposition. Then I was carried by the demon high above the world, and before my eyes there passed a vision of its pomp and power. All this was offered to me, if only I would consent to do homage to the demon, and confess myself his nominee. At that my inmost soul revolted: I bade him begone, and reminded him of the solemn obligation resting upon man to worship God, and Him alone. Thereupon the demon left me, and heavenly beings came ministering to me in my extremity.'

That is the spirit of the narrative, the only difference being that the evangelists give it, as nearly as possible, in the precise words of Jesus. We need go no further in our attempt to divine its origin.

But what of the mystery which surrounds it? Did it all really happen? Or was it a play of the imagination? Did the temptation rise from the weakened body and overstrained mind of Jesus? Or

was the manifestation of the demon, actual, visible, tangible, and the temptations as real and substantial as any of the daily events of life? It is wise to take the narrative as we find it, as it has been handed down to us, in all probability from the lips of Jesus himself. The few words of Mark indicate that he regarded it as a history of actual occurrences. Possibly, however, it may have been an experience like that described by Paul, that vision and revelation when he was 'caught up even to the third heaven,' but could only say, 'whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth.' In either case, the reality was certain. If we are not prepared to accept the New Testament evidences of things spiritual and supernatural, we must part company with the evangelists and apostles, and with Jesus himself.

We left the narrative of John at the point where Nathanael was introduced to Jesus, who was then about to quit Judea for Galilee, probably with his few disciples. They had been but three days in his company when they witnessed a marvellous exhibition of his power. The mother of Jesus had something to do with a marriage-feast held in Cana (which is called by Josephus 'a village') of Galilee. Jesus was bidden, and the invitation extended to his disciples. 'And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage.' The requirements of the guests exceeded the provision made for them: the supply of wine was exhausted. The mother of Jesus called his attention to the fact. 'And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.' The answer of Jesus sounds to us very peculiar. 'And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.' There is no doubt that the term 'Woman,' so used, was one of reverence and affection, for by it Jesus addressed her in his last words. For the meaning of the sentence, Alford refers to four passages. Let us resort to the literal renderings of them by Young, who translates the passage before us as follows: 'Jesus saith to her, What—to me and to thee, woman? mine hour is not yet come.' 'And the King saith, What—to me and to you, O sons of Zeruiah? for let him revile.' 'And David said, What—to me and to you, O sons of Zeruiah, that ye are to me to day for an adversary.' 'Hereafter your children may speak to our children, saying, What to you and to the Lord God of Israel?' 'Away; what—to us and to thee, Jesus the Nazarene?' From these instances it appears that this form of sentence was used in rejecting advice, and as expressing separation or a desire for it. Alford says: 'The answer of our Lord is beyond question one of reproof, and disclaimer of participation in the grounds on which the request was made.' Whether that is exactly the case or not, it is obvious that Mary must have had a certain object and expectation in speaking to her son; that, in some way, she had been prepared to anticipate the performance of some act by him, but that he saw fit to delay it. So far from being repelled by the answer, Mary bade the servants hold themselves ready to obey any instructions, however apparently strange, which Jesus might give them. Does not this indicate that there had been some previous display of power on his part, of a similar nature to that which she now looked for? 'His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever

12 ii. Cor. 2

2 John 1, 2

,, 3

, 4

19 John 26

16 ii. Sam. 10

19 ii. Sam. 12

22 Jos. 24

1 Mark 24

2 John 5

John 6

he saith unto you, do it.' The account bears the stamp of an eye-witness, who tells us not only that certain empty vessels were there, but their number—six, their kind—water-jugs (Young), such as were customarily used by the Jews for cleansing purposes, and their capacity—roughly two or three firkins. 'Now there were six water-pots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.' Alford explains: 'The word here rendered *firkin* (Young renders it *measures*) is probably equivalent to the Jewish 'bath,' which held 8 gall. 7.4 pints. According to this, the quantity . . . would be . . . 126 gallons.' Jesus desired the servants to fill these vessels with water, and they obeyed his command. 'Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.' It was a strange thing to require, and still stranger was his next direction. He bade them draw some of the water, and carry it to the superintendent of the festival. 'And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler (or, steward) of the feast. And they bare it.' But some marvellous, incomprehensible change had taken place in the liquid. It had become wine! The steward tasted it, not knowing its origin, and was surprised at its quality! So superior was it to what they had been drinking, that the bridegroom was called forward and congratulated upon having reversed the usual practice of giving the best things first. Here was the finest vintage kept for the last. In the guest-chamber, nothing more than that was known, but the servants outside were able to testify that they had drawn but water at the first. 'And when the ruler of the feast had tasted the water now become (or, that it had become) wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse (inferior—Young): thou hast kept the good wine until now.'

.. 9, 10

Are we able to believe this astounding narrative? Or are we disposed to doubt it? It is important to discriminate wisely between truth and falsehood. The capacity of one man for sober faith—or blind credulity, as the case may be—is no measure for another. 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' Neither is an unquestioning belief, under the pressure of authority, to be imposed upon any reasoning, truth-seeking mind. It is time for us to avoid the common error of accepting the historic narratives of the New Testament 'in the gross,' as though they were above human criticism. Impelled by the love of truth, we are especially bound to protest against any fettering of free and honest judgment by the doctrine of Inspiration. At the time the passages which are supposed to prove it were written, the New Testament had not assumed its present shape. 'For freedom did Christ set us free;' and the right of free enquiry must be exercised as a precious and responsible possession. Do we, then, believe this astounding narrative? Or do we deem it utterly incredible? Or do we stand in doubt about it?

5 Gal. 1

The first question for consideration is as to the credibility of the evangelist. Did he believe what he wrote? The whole tone and manner of John's gospel, from beginning to end, makes us feel sure of that. At once, then, we reach the conclusion, that this account was either true, received from—if not recorded by—an eye-witness,



or that it was a deliberate forgery—from first to last a concocted lie. If it stood alone, the latter conclusion might seem reasonable, no absolute proof or disproof being possible. But it is one of a series of miraculous events, handed down not by one evangelist only, but by four, and all accepted unhesitatingly in the first days of Christianity, by men as truth-loving and acute of mind as ourselves. We stand here at the fountain-head of Christian teaching; we are not dealing with marvels and mysteries recorded by ascetics whose minds had been nourished with unwholesome theological ideas; probably, as men give us now-a-days ‘historical novels’ with a blending of truth and fiction, so the monks of old furnished forth and amplified lives of saints after the same fashion, suited of course to the craving of the age for what was marvellous and fantastic. But in each of the four gospels the supernatural is so interwoven with the natural, that they must stand or fall together; not this or that particular miracle, but all the miracles throughout the narratives. Neither can we imagine any plausible reason or object for deception. Who had anything to gain by setting afloat such tales? True, you may find false wonders elsewhere, but where mingled, as the gospel miracles are, with undoubted history, and teachings purer and loftier than can be found in any other book?

But if we accept these miracles as true, we must take them with all their consequences. Not, certainly, as proofs of the supreme Divinity of him who wrought them: that idea was never in the minds of the first beholders, but was the outcome of later scholastic thought; but we must needs believe that there are powers at work in the universe beyond those which we can see and comprehend. Is there aught incredible in that? The scientific spirit of the age says, No; for it has already touched, at many points, the unseen energies of nature, made the seemingly impossible possible, weighed and analysed the stars above, and practically annihilated time and space. Yet, that a Galilean peasant should have known how to touch the secret springs of Nature, or of the Supernatural, and perform works almost beyond the bounds of credence,—that is indeed a marvel exceeding all the rest.

The Worker of the miracle was content to leave it to speak for itself. His presence at the festival, at the opening of his career as a Teacher, was significant. Trench remarks that ‘he gives us his own testimony against the tendency which our indolence ever favours, of giving up those things and occasions to the world and the Devil, which we have not Christian boldness to mingle in and purify.’ Alford also takes the occasion to condemn the ‘modern religionism, which would keep the leaven distinct from the lump, for fear *it* should become *unleavened*.’ It is, too, a striking fact, that Jesus, who refused to change a stone into bread for his own hunger, should, for the sake of others, have turned water into wine.

This miracle was but the first of a series. ‘This beginning of his <sup>2 John 11</sup> signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.’ It seems an overstraining of the passage to take it as a statement that no previous miracle had ever been wrought by him. Alford, however, takes that view, and to Mary’s observation, ‘They have no wine,’ adds this comment: ‘She cannot have had *from experience* any reason to suppose that her Son would work a miracle, for this *was his first*.’ But why, then, did

- she charge the servants to obey strictly any injunctions he might give them? The evangelist adds: 'and manifested his glory.' The import of the word 'glory' has been considered in 1 John 14 (page 41), and its application here to a miraculous display of power seems to confirm the view there expressed: Jesus was distinguishing himself by an exhibition of superior authority and influence. And thereby the confidence of his disciples in him was confirmed. 'And his disciples believed on him.'

At this point the chronology of the gospel narratives is difficult to follow.

- 4 Mat. 12, 13 Matthew says that Jesus withdrew into Galilee; left Nazareth; came and dwelt in Capernaum.
- 1 Mark 14 Mark says that he came into Galilee preaching, and went with  
" 21 certain disciples into Capernaum.
- 4 Luke 15, 16 Luke says that he went into Galilee; came to Nazareth; came  
" 31 down to Capernaum.
- 2 John 12 John says that 'after this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and there they abode not many days.'
- Matthew and Mark state that the journey to Galilee was after the imprisonment of the Baptist. The visit to Nazareth is placed by Luke before that to Capernaum, but it is obvious from 4 Luke 23 that Jesus had visited and worked miracles at Capernaum before his sermon in Nazareth. This coincides with John's statement that there was a visit to Capernaum of short duration. John's narrative is to the effect that immediately after the testimony given by the Baptist to Jesus (1 John 35, 43), the journey to Galilee was undertaken; that the miracle in Cana happened 'on the third day,' and was followed by the short visit to Capernaum. Either, therefore, this was prior to the imprisonment of the Baptist, and to the journeys alluded to by Matthew and Mark, or the arrest of the Baptist must have followed immediately upon the giving of his testimony to Jesus. The latter view appears to have been adopted by Luke, for he has inserted before his account of the temptation the fact and reason of the Baptist's imprisonment: 'But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in the prison.' The insertion of this fact here, apparently somewhat out of place and prematurely, may be taken as indicating the desire of Luke to introduce it before the journey to Galilee. Even so, however, the narratives do not fit into each other: on the one hand, Matthew attributes the journey to Galilee to the fact of Jesus having 'heard' of John's imprisonment, and Mark says that it was 'after' that event; on the other hand, the tenor of John's narrative leads to the conclusion that a few days only elapsed between the witness of John and the departure of Jesus.
- 4 Mat 12, 13 Here is Matthew's account: 'Now when he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali.' Mark states: 'Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee.' Luke: 'And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.' But John expressly avoids

1 Mark 14

4 Luke 14

saying that Jesus 'came and *dwelt* in Capernaum.' 'After this he <sup>2 John 12</sup> went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples : and there they abode not many days.' Two visits to Capernaum are described, and John's account is prior to that of the other evangelists. Matthew's wording may perhaps be held to accord with this : 'He withdrew into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum : ' that is, he was actually in Galilee, at Nazareth, when the tidings about John reached him, and thereupon he withdrew yet further northward, to Capernaum, and settled there. It seems to be implied that the resolve to do this was taken in consequence of the Baptist's arrest. There is nothing derogatory to Jesus in that supposition. Herod had imprisoned, for his plain speaking, the man who had taught the Jews to expect Jesus. If he followed John, preaching anywhere about the same neighbourhood, he would attract the notice of Herod. To expose himself, at the outset of his teaching, to a collision with the governing power, might be brave, but not wise. His aims lay in another direction : he sought to evangelize the masses. That was the sphere of labour to which he devoted himself, and to it Matthew alludes in words full of enthusiasm :

'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by (or, through) <sup>4 Mat. 14-16</sup> Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

Toward (Gr. the way of) the sea, beyond Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles (Gr. nations),

The people which sat in darkness

Saw a great light;

And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death,

To them did light spring up.'

The quotation is from Isaiah, and with the context, stands thus in <sup>8 Isa. 22</sup> the Revised Version : 'And they shall look unto the earth, and <sup>9 Isa. 1, 2</sup> behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish ; and into thick darkness *they shall be* driven away. But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light : they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.' That differs materially from the Authorised Version, and Young's version differs from both. It is not necessary, however, to feel sure as to the meaning of the passage in order to understand Matthew's application of it. He takes just so much as corresponds with the events related. He omits the reference in the original to the affliction and the more grievous affliction (A. V.), or the anguish and contempt (R. V.); he seizes upon the words 'Zebulun,' 'Naphtali,' 'the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations,' and dwells especially upon the 'great light,' and quotes the full words as to its manifestation. Still there is so much in that 9th chapter of Isaiah which may be deemed applicable to Jesus, that we should be disposed to take Matthew's expression, 'that it might be fulfilled' literally, as denoting that the one and only purpose and significance of the prophet's words was understood by Matthew to relate to this preaching in the borders of

Zebulun and Naphtali, were it not that elsewhere he uses the same expression 'that it might be fulfilled' in connection with prophecies the primary significance of which could not with any show of reason be held to coincide with his application of them. It is enough that there was a remarkable 'fulfilment,' 'filling out,' 'exemplification,' call it what you will, of Isaiah's vision in the preaching of Jesus.

1 Mat. 22, 23  
2 Mat. 17, 18  
1 Mark 14, 15

Mark indicates the nature of Jesus' preaching. 'Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.' Possibly Jesus himself alluded to the prophecy of Isaiah, in the words 'the time is fulfilled.' The Revisers have followed the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. by omitting 'of the Kingdom,' so that the reading is now simply 'the gospel of God.' We cannot be too careful to represent correctly what Jesus really preached, and therefore it is well to turn to the literal translation of Dr. Young. The word 'gospel' now includes whatever its expounders teach about it; but its actual meaning is 'good news,' and what Jesus proclaimed was simply 'the good news of God,' a message from God acceptable to men, and which should cause all hearts to rejoice. It involved man's entire submission to God, and the recognition of the divine supremacy, 'the reign of God.' Therefore the first essential was—reformation: 'Reform ye, and believe in the good news.' A changed and better life for a changed and better time,—man obedient and God supreme,—that was the scope of Jesus' preaching. It was, to use the common expression, of a distinctly 'religious' character; the discourses were delivered in the Jewish places of worship, and the fame of the preacher was great and widespread. 'And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.'

4 Luke 15  
2 Luke 39, 51  
4 Luke 16

In the course of his tour he revisited Nazareth, the place where much of his early life had been spent. 'And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.' There also, on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue, prepared to take a prominent part in the service. 'And he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.' The book handed to him was Isaiah, wherein he found a passage serving for his text. 'And there was delivered unto him the book (or, a roll) of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book (or, roll), and found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because (or, wherefore) he anointed me to preach good tidings (or, the gospel) to the poor;  
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'

61 Isa. I, 2

The original passage stands as follows in Isaiah: 'The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' The Revisers, following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., have omitted in Luke the words 'to heal the brokenhearted,'



which are in the Authorised Version. The words 'and recovering of sight to the blind' are not in the original passage. Either they were in the manuscript from which Luke quoted, or they were incorporated in the record of Jesus' discourse, or they were introduced by a subsequent transcriber. It would seem that in Luke a line was omitted and a line inserted; and that the omitted line respecting 'the brokenhearted,' was supplied by later copyists, not being in the two oldest MSS.

Jesus having read the passage, began to discourse upon it. The scene is very graphically described, evidently by an eye-witness. 'And he closed the book (or, roll), and gave it back to the attendant, <sup>4 Luke 20</sup> and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.' Young's literal translation is, as usual, still more graphic: 'And having folded the roll, having given it back to the officer, he sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were gazing on him.' The opening words of the discourse were not a little striking. 'And <sup>21</sup> he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.' The expression 'in your ears' may be taken to indicate that only the report of such things had reached them: they had heard, though as yet they had not seen. But there was universal testimony in his favour, and all were astonished by the charm of his eloquence. 'And all bare him witness, and wondered <sup>22</sup> at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth.' The marvel was enhanced by the consideration of the lowliness of his parentage. 'And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?' It is evident <sup>22</sup> from this that all the marvels relating to his birth were unknown to them. Nor is it to be wondered at that in the space of thirty years, many having died and a new generation having sprung up, they should have been obliterated from the minds of men, except those who had known them from the first and kept them, like Mary his mother, in their hearts.

In the course of his address, Jesus deemed it necessary to anticipate probable criticism. His works were mere matter of hearsay in Nazareth: he would naturally be challenged to perform them there as well as elsewhere. 'And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say <sup>23</sup> unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country.' But he gave several reasons why that might not be:

1. It was the common lot of teachers to find no favour in their own neighbourhood. 'And he said, Verily I say unto you, No <sup>24</sup> prophet is acceptable in his own country.'

2. Miracles and prophets were not for all. 'But of a truth I say <sup>25, 26</sup> unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath (Gr. Sarepta), in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.'

3. Neither were all willing to seek out a prophet and the aid he could give. 'And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of <sup>27</sup> Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.'

These illustrations indicate the existence in the community at Nazareth of an unwillingness to admit the claim of Jesus to be a

teacher. That he should thus hold his ground and justify himself, conveyed a reproach to them. His words rankled in their minds; admiration of his eloquence was overborne by anger. 'And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things.' He their teacher! The synagogue was no place for him, nor should their city any longer hold him! They rose up, probably without waiting the end of his discourse, thrust him out of the place, beyond the city walls even, and then still led him on up to the hill-top, talking meantime of throwing him head-foremost over it. 'And they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.' By the time they reached the summit, the first heat of anger may be supposed to have cooled down somewhat, and they might well pause to contemplate the enormity of the crime they proposed, and the consequences it involved. Jesus was able to avail himself of their hesitation: he simply passed through the crowd, no hand venturing to stop him, and so left them. 'But he passing through the midst of them went his way.' Dean Alford observes: 'Our Lord's passing through the midst of them is *evidently miraculous*.' That is not at all evident from the narrative. It may be taken as a rule, that whenever an evangelist describes the performance of a miracle, it will be in such a way that no one will need to explain that it is 'evidently a miracle.'

Having been thus ignominiously expelled by his former fellow-townsmen, Jesus went again to Capernaum. 'And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee.' Alford states that the expression 'came down' is used here, as in 2 John 12, 'because Nazareth lay high, and Capernaum on the sea of Galilee.' There Jesus at once began a course of teaching, availing himself of the synagogues on the sabbaths. That would be the inference drawn from the words 'sabbath-days' in the Authorised Version, but the Revisers and Tischendorf restrict the teaching to a particular sabbath. 'And he was teaching them on the sabbath day.' This agrees with Mark's account: 'And they go into Capernaum: and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught.' Both evangelists describe the astonishment of the people at his authoritative mode of preaching, so different from the—probably—halting, uncertain, mildly orthodox style of the regular spiritual teachers. 'And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the Scribes.' The difference may have been merely such as would naturally exist between the delivery of an honest and original thinker, stating clearly and boldly the truths on which his mind had laid hold, and which he longed to impart in burning words to others, and the perfunctory addresses of those who had been bred up as teachers and were impressed with the conviction that there was nothing more to be learnt or taught. The Revisers have altered the word 'power' in Luke to 'authority,' agreeing therein with Young and Tischendorf, and 'harmonising it with Mark's narrative. 'And he was teaching them on the sabbath day: and they were astonished at his teaching; for his word was with authority.'

The synagogue service was interrupted suddenly in an extraordinary manner. The accounts of Mark and Luke are almost word for word

the same. 'And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil (Gr. demon).' The writers take that fact for granted, here and elsewhere. Before entering upon the question of demoniacal possession, let us follow the particulars given with respect to it in this instance. Mark speaks of 'a man with an unclean spirit.' Luke's words bring out the meaning that the allusion is not to the man's own natural spirit, but to another spirit within him : 'a man which had a spirit of an unclean demon.' This man addressed Jesus. 'And he cried out with a loud voice, Ah ! (or, Let alone) what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.' We are already outside the range of ordinary experience. Here are two personalities in one human form. The spirit within the man recognizes Jesus as one to be dreaded, and likely to destroy him and his fellow spirits. He had some prior knowledge of Jesus, and spoke of him under the name which the angel Gabriel had given to him. Jesus did not treat the outburst as proceeding from some wild delirium. He responded to the call of the spiritual Being, and bade him be silent and quit the man through whom he spoke. 'And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.' The words produced a marvellous effect. Mark tells of convulsive movements and loud outcries, accompanying the departure of the spirit. 'And the unclean spirit, tearing (or, convulsing) him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.' Luke describes the man as thrown down, but not otherwise hurt. 'And when the devil (or, demon) had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no hurt.' All the beholders were astonished, asking one another what was the significance of this new teaching and new mode of acting. 'And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this ? a new teaching ! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.'

Two things are evident upon the surface of this account : (1) That the people generally believed in demoniacal possession. (2) That Jesus endorsed that opinion, and showed by his word and deed that it was correct. If we deny this, the narrative falls to pieces in our hands : there is no longer any truth or reality about it. On this subject the remarks of Dean Alford are well considered and worthy of quotation : '(1) The gospel narratives are *distinctly pledged to the historic truth of these occurrences*. Either they are true, or the Gospels are false. For they do not stand in the same, or a similar position, with the discrepancies in detail, so frequent between the Evangelists : but they form part of that general groundwork in which all agree. (2) Nor can it be said that they represent the *opinion of the time*, and use words in accordance with it. This might have been difficult to answer, but that they not only give such expressions as *possessed with devils, demonized* (Mark v. 16 ; Luke viii. 36), and other like ones, but relate to us words *spoken by the Lord Jesus, in which the personality and presence of the demons is distinctly implied*. See especially Luke xi. 17—26. Now either our Lord spoke these words, or He did not. If He did not, then we must at once set aside the concurrent testimony of the Evangelists to a plain matter of fact ; in other words establish a principle which will overthrow equally

every fact related in the Gospels. If He did, it is wholly at variance with any Christian idea of the perfection of truthfulness in Him who was Truth itself, to suppose him to have used such plain and solemn words repeatedly, before His disciples and the Jews, in encouragement of, and connivance at, a lying superstition. (3) After these remarks it will be unnecessary to refute that view of demoniacal possession which makes it *identical with mere bodily disease*,—as it is included above; but we may observe that it is everywhere in the Gospels distinguished from disease, and in such a way as to show that, at all events, the two were not in that day confounded. (See Mat. ix. 32, 33, and compare Mark vii. 32.) (4) The question then arises, *Granted the plain historical truth of demoniacal possession, What was it?* This question, in the suspension, or withdrawal, of the gift of “discerning of spirits” in the modern Church, is not easy to answer. But we may gather from the Gospel narratives some important ingredients for our description. The demoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated (“possessed” is the most exact word that could be found) by one or more of those fallen spirits, who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of *demons*, *evil spirits*, *unclean spirits*, their chief being the *devil* or Satan) to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. (See Acts v. 3: John xiii. 2, and *passim*.) He stood in a totally different position from the abandoned wicked man, who morally is given over to the devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment: but the demoniac for deepest compassion. There appears to have been in him a *double will* and *double consciousness*—sometimes the cruel spirit thinking and speaking in him, sometimes his poor crushed self crying out to the Saviour of men for mercy: a terrible advantage taken, and a personal realization, by the malignant powers of evil, of the fierce struggle between sense and conscience in the man of morally divided life. Hence it has been not improbably supposed, that some of these demoniacs may have arrived at their dreadful state through various progressive degrees of guilt and sensual abandonment. “Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial band between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness.” (Trench on the Miracles, p. 160.) (5) The frequently urged objection, how comes it that this malady is not *now* among us? admits of an easy answer, even if the assumption be granted. The period of our Lord’s being on earth was certainly more than any other in the history of the world under the dominion of evil. The foundations of man’s moral being were broken up, and the “hour and power of darkness” prevailing. Trench excellently remarks, “It was exactly the crisis for such soul-maladies as these, in which the spiritual and bodily should be thus strangely interlinked, and it is nothing wonderful that they should have abounded at that time; for the predominance of certain spiritual maladies at certain epochs of the world’s history, which were specially fitted for their generation, with their gradual decline and disappearance in others less congenial to them, is a fact itself admitting no manner of question” (pp. 162, 163). Besides, as the same writer goes on to observe, there can be no doubt that the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and the con-



tinued testimony of Jesus borne by the Church in her preaching and ordinances, have broken and kept down, in some measure, the grosser manifestations of the power of Satan. (See Luke x. 18.) But (6) the assumption contained in the objection above must not be thus unreservedly granted. We cannot tell in how many cases of insanity the malady may not even now be traced to direct demoniacal possession. And finally, (7) the above view, which I am persuaded is the only one honestly consistent with any kind of belief in the truth of the Gospel narratives, will offend none, but those who deny the existence of the world of spirits altogether, and who are continually striving to narrow the limits of our belief in that which is invisible; a view which at every step involves difficulties far more serious than those which it attempts to escape.'

The exhibition of a power so extraordinary on the part of Jesus made him at once notorious. His name and fame were spread abroad. 'And the report of him went out straightway everywhere' 1 Mark 28 into all the region of Galilee round about.'

On quitting the synagogue, Jesus went to the house of Simon and Andrew, the two brothers who had first attached themselves to him 1 John 49-52 as a teacher. In their company were now two others. 'And straight- 1 Mark 29 way, when they were (or, he was) come out of the synagogue, they (or, he) came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.' The mother-in-law of Simon was lying there, suffering from an attack of fever. The fact was mentioned to Jesus, who went to her and took her hand in his. That touch dissipated the fever, so that she rose at once, and took her part in the household duties of hospitality. Matthew says only that Jesus 'saw' her; Mark adds 8 Mat. 14 that 'they told him of her,' and Luke that 'they besought him for her.' 1 Mark 30 The two first evangelists describe her merely as 'sick of a fever;' Luke adds that it was a 'great fever,' and that Jesus 'stood over her and rebuked the fever.' Mark tells that he 'raised her up,' but neither he nor Matthew hint at any words of rebuke being uttered. These differences are not material. 'And Simon's wife's 4 Luke 35, 36 mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she rose up and ministered unto them.'

The knowledge of such a miracle could not for long have been confined to those within the house. In all probability accounts of it spread quickly through the city, and after a time, towards the cool of the evening, an enormous crowd was gathered round the door. They had not assembled for mere curiosity, but all who had sick friends brought them for healing. 'And at even, when the sun did set, they 1 Mark 32, 33 brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with devils (or, demoniacs). And all the city was gathered together at the door.' Jesus exercised freely his wonderful gift of healing. Mark says that 'many' were cured, which seems merely to denote that no account was taken of the number, for Matthew says it was 'all,' and Luke 'every one of them.' 'And he healed many that 34 were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many devils (Gr. demons).' Luke tells us the cure of the sick was wrought by a touch of the hands. 'And he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed 4 Luke 40 them.' That does not seem, however, to apply to the demoniacs, for Matthew says: 'he cast out the spirits with a word.' Luke gives 8 Mat. 16

4 Luke 41 further details with respect to that. 'And devils (Gr. demons) also came out from many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Son of God.' Finding this to be the case, Jesus was careful to stop such outcries. 'And rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.' Mark implies that there were outcries, saying, 'And he suffered not the devils (Gr. demons) to speak, because they knew him.' In 4 Luke 41 the Revisers have omitted the word 'Christ' before 'the Son of God,' following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. In 1 Mark 34 those two manuscripts after 'because they knew him,' add 'to be Christ,' but the authorised and revised versions omit those three words, which in the Sinaitic MS. were inserted by a later hand.

8 Mat. 17 Matthew, always on the watch for fulfilled prophecies, adds, 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by (or, through) Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.' The quotation is from that marvellous chapter 53 Isaiah, so many of the sayings in which are evidently and literally applicable to the history of Jesus.

When the beneficent work of that sabbath-day was ended, Jesus allowed himself only a few hours of repose. Long before daylight he rose, left the house, sought a place of solitude, and there poured forth his soul in prayer. 'And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.' After a time, Simon and his companions missed him, tracked his steps, found him, and told him that already there was a multitude waiting to see him. 'And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee.' But Jesus showed no intention of returning to Capernaum. On the contrary, he invited his disciples to go with him to other towns in the neighbourhood, where he might preach in the same way. And he reminded them that a missionary tour of that kind was his settled purpose and object. 'And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth.' It was not easy to do this, however, for there came now flocking out in search of him the multitudes who had the day before gathered to see his wonderful works of healing. They were anxious to keep him with them, and sought to hold him back, begging him not to leave them. 'And the multitudes sought after him, and came unto him and would have stayed him, that he should not go from them.' To these entreaties Jesus turned a deaf ear. He must not be moved from his purpose. He told them that the commission given to him involved the duty of preaching the glad message from place to place. 'But he said unto them, I must preach the good tidings (or, gospel) of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for therefore was I sent.' This purpose Jesus carried out. 'And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out devils (Gr. demons).' Luke records the same fact. 'And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.' The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read 'of Judæa.' The Revisers have inserted a note that 'very many ancient authorities read Judæa.' Dean Alford remarks: 'The reading Judæa must, on any intelligible critical principles, be adopted. So far, however, being plain, I confess that all attempts to explain the fact seem to me

fitful. The three Evangelists relate no ministry in Judæa, with this single exception. And our narrative is thus brought into the most startling discrepancy with that of St. Mark, in which unquestionably the same portion of the sacred history is related. Still, these are considerations which must not weigh in the least degree with the critic. It is his province simply to track out what *is* the sacred text, not what, in his own feeble and partial judgment, it *ought to have been*. If there is such an obvious discrepancy upon the same point in two narratives, it follows that one of them is erroneous. But the Dean was afraid to say so, because he was dealing with 'the sacred text.' This is an instance of the injurious effects, direct and indirect, of men's finely-spun theories about the inspiration of Scripture. Tischendorf scrupled not to retain the word 'Galilee,' as, it would seem, early transcribers scrupled not to depart from the reading of the oldest manuscripts. But there is some reason for supposing that Luke alludes here to a course of preaching in Judæa, and not in Galilee. Alford says that 'the three Evangelists relate no ministry in Judæa, with this exception;' but the fourth Evangelist does: 'After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them and baptized.' 3 John 22 The ministry in Galilee which we have been following was after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, but the ministry in Judæa mentioned by the fourth Evangelist was prior to that event. 'And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water (Gr. were many waters) there: and they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.' Luke having recorded the saying of Jesus that he was sent to preach throughout Galilee, and being on the point of giving an account of what happened there, may have thrown in by way of parenthesis this explanation that a similar course of action was undertaken elsewhere also: ('And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judæa.')

The solemn message which Jesus set himself to deliver is called by Luke 'the word of God.' The people showed so great an anxiety to hear him that, on the occasion now referred to, the preacher was incommoded by the crowd, which had gathered on the shore of the lake. 'Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.' At the water's edge lay two fishing-boats: Jesus saw them, and as they were for the time unoccupied, he got into one of them. 'And he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets.' 5 Luke 1 One boat belonged to Simon, who, at Jesus' request, put off a little from the shore. Jesus then sat down, and continued his discourse to the crowd which stood in front of the boat. 'And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat.' The discourse being ended, Jesus bade Simon put the boat into deep water, and throw out the nets for a catch. 'And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.' Alford explains: '*Launch out* is, in the original, singular, as addressed to Peter alone; *let down* is plural, as addressed to the fishermen in the ship collectively.' Simon answered Jesus that they had already spent

the whole night in fruitless toil ; but that out of deference to him, as though his bidding were in itself a good augury, he would throw out the net once more. ‘And Simon answered and said, Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing : but at thy word I will let down the nets.’ So the nets were again cast out, and then hauled in : and never before had they held a catch so large. They were overstrained, full to bursting, needing to be carefully handled to prevent breakage.

5 Luke 5  
 „ 6 ‘And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes : and their nets were breaking.’ They made signs to those in the other boat to come to their assistance, and with their help the load was lifted. Both boats were filled, and so enormous was the weight of fish that each of them lay deep in the water. ‘And they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.’ Simon gazed in utter bewilderment ; then he fell prostrate at the feet of Jesus. He could marvel at him, ay ! and worship him, but he felt that it was not for such an one as he to be associated with such an one as Jesus. Let the great and wonder-working Teacher go his way, albeit he had some time before discerned in Simon a strength and firmness which entitled him to the surname of Peter, ‘rock’ or ‘stone.’ Simon felt himself, beside him whom he had been calling ‘Master’ (verse 5), a sin-degraded man. Better instruments than he could be found to carry out the Master’s purposes : it were better that Jesus should leave him, and seek out some other for a disciple and companion. ‘But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.’ Lord, indeed, he had shown himself : the ideal man of whom the Psalmist sang :

1 John 42  
 5 Luke 8  
 8 Ps. 6-8

‘Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands ;  
 Thou hast put all things under his feet ;  
 All sheep and oxen,  
 Yea, and the beasts of the field ;  
 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
 Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.’

Simon was not alone in his astonishment : all his crew shared it, and they also who had come in the other boat and had helped to draw in and empty the nets. ‘For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken ; and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.’

5 Luke 9, 10  
 „ 10  
 „ 11

The suggestion of Simon was at once dismissed by Jesus. Let him not fear to enter upon the work to which he was called, but, on the contrary, take this unprecedented stroke of success in fishing as a good augury of what he might accomplish when devoted to the teaching and gaining over of others. ‘And Jesus said unto Simon. Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch (Gr. take alive) men.’ Young renders, ‘thou shalt be catching men,’ and Alford ‘be a-catcher of men : it was a call to forsake the old occupation for the new one.’ So Simon understood it : and his two partners saw also reason to apply it to themselves. ‘And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him.’ This must mean, not that they cut themselves off for ever from their former mode of livelihood, and relinquished their property, but that they left their servants (or.



it may have been, relatives) in charge of the boats, and in their hands the sale of the cargo of fish, and the conduct, for the time being, of the business. The Revised Version favours this view, by rendering 'they left all' instead of 'they forsook all.'

The account given by Matthew of the call of Peter, Andrew, James and John differs somewhat from the above. Either he omits certain details, or he describes a prior call and following: either supposition is admissible. 'And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him. And going on from thence he saw other two brethren, James (or, Jacob) the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they straightway left the boat, and their father, and followed him.' Mark's account corresponds almost word for word with this; only the expression there given is, 'I will make you to become fishers of men;' instead of 'going on from thence,' Mark has 'going on a little further;' and he adds that Zebedee was left in the boat 'with the hired servants.'

4 Mat. 18-22

Andrew and Peter had known Jesus for some time previously, having been the first to seek him out as a Teacher, and having, probably, gone with him, together with Philip and Nathanael, from Judæa into Galilee. This will account for the selection of them by Jesus to accompany him in his further travels, and for their readiness to obey the call. It is reasonable also to assume that Jesus had prior acquaintance with James and John; or, at least, not to assume the contrary.

1 John 40-47

We have seen that these four went with Jesus to Capernaum, where they witnessed the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, and the other marvellous works of Jesus; after which occurred the miraculous draught of fishes, when they deliberately and finally resolved to relinquish their ordinary occupations in order to be with him.

1 Mark 21

All the events we have been considering which took place in Galilee appear to have been subsequent to the imprisonment of the Baptist. Let us now take up the account given by the fourth evangelist of a prior ministry in Judæa. When the first miracle was performed in Cana of Galilee, Jesus had already certain disciples. These accompanied him to Judæa, and with them he remained, gaining new followers and baptizing them. 'After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa, and there he tarried with them, and baptized.' The work of the Baptist was going on elsewhere at the same time. 'And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water (Gr. were many waters) there: and they came, and were baptized.' Up to this time the Baptist had been left free to pursue his mission. 'For John was not yet east into prison.' The fact of two teachers simultaneously administering baptism excited attention and comment. The rite involved a question as to purification, and a discussion thereon arose between the disciples of John and a certain Jew. 'There arose therefore a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying.' The Authorised Version has 'Jews,' but the Revisers have used the

2 John 1 2

3 John 22

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singular, 'a Jew,' following the three oldest MSS., the Sinaitic having been altered to that by a later hand. The evangelist explains that 'Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples;' and between one of them and John's disciples the argument took place. The matter was brought to the knowledge of the Baptist. 'And they came unto John, and said to him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.' The reply of John was couched in a tone of humble, thankful acquiescence. 'John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven.' The German version here seems more expressive: 'Ein Mensch kann nichts nehmen,' 'A man can take nothing:' he can take only that which lies within the compass of his powers, and the power to take and the thing taken are alike from God. The Greek verb is *lambanō*, which is thus defined: 'to take, take hold of, grasp, seize; to take away, carry off; to take in, receive hospitably, entertain; to gain, win, procure, acquire.' Between John and Jesus there could be no rivalry. It was not to be wondered at that Jesus should gain a larger following, and exercise a wider influence. The disciples of the Baptist knew well that he had never arrogated to himself the Messiahship, but that on the contrary he had declared himself the forerunner and introducer of Jesus. 'Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him.' Alford explains: 'The word *him* in the original does not refer to "the Christ," but to Jesus, as the subject of ver. 26; and this is not merely a *general* testimony with regard to the Messiah, but a *personal* one to Jesus. In reading this verse therefore, strong emphasis should be laid on the word *him*.'

The Baptist proceeded to bring into strong contrast the inferiority of his own position to that of Jesus, by a symbolical reference. He compared Jesus to a bridegroom, and himself to the bridegroom's friend. Everything was for or in honour of the bridegroom: the bride, the feast, the crowd, the watchings, the welcome; the bridegroom's friend stands waiting to receive him, and rejoices greatly when the voice of the bridegroom assures him that the joyous ceremony is consummated. 'He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.' John could wish for himself no higher lot, nor for his labours a happier end. His position was subordinate; his work was drawing to a close, and that of Jesus was beginning. It was well that his own light should pale before the rising of Messiah's sun. 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' Far more is involved in this than the superiority of one man to another. John went on to speak of the transcendent origin of Jesus. 'He that cometh from above is above all.' The contrast lay between an earth-born man, conversant with earthly things, and a Being who had descended from heaven. 'He that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh; he that cometh from heaven is above all.' In considering the positive and mysterious utterances of this evangelist in the opening of his narrative, we felt the necessity of watching for any indications as to the source and authority on which he based such stupendous statements. Here we find them to be in harmony with the teachings

4 John 2

3 John 26

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1 John 1-18

of the Baptist, the man declared to be miraculously born, divinely <sup>1</sup> Luke 13-17 instructed, and sent forth as the Christ's forerunner. But at this point we find ourselves wrapt and lost in mysteries; for the Baptist proceeds thus: 'What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth <sup>3</sup> John 32 witness.' The Revisers have inserted the following note: 'Some ancient authorities read "he that cometh from heaven beareth witness of what he hath seen and heard."' This reading is adopted by Tischendorf. How majestic and bewildering are the ideas contained in this statement concerning Jesus. A higher than human origin; a prior life in some loftier world; reminiscences within him of former heavenly experiences; and a set purpose of revealing them to men! The Baptist's words are calm, clear, decided; but what a height, depth, breadth of meaning in them! Teaching such as this lies wholly beyond the touch and ken of our groping earthly criticisms. Listening to it, we are overwhelmed with reverential wonder; and as we ponder miracle after miracle, and discourse after discourse from the lips of Jesus pregnant with surpassing wisdom, we find the entire narrative of one piece and texture, each line of the marvellously wrought pattern harmonising with every other. What a history is this! What a gift to man this glorious gospel!

Having spoken of Jesus as one who 'beareth witness of what he hath seen and heard,' the Baptist added, 'And no man receiveth his witness;' which we may take to mean that no man had received knowledge of such things or power to testify of them. This is to give the word 'receive' which is the same as before—*lambanō*, the sense it bears in verse 27, 'A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven.' And what he, alone, received from heaven, others were able to receive from him, and by accepting his testimony they solemnly ratified the truth of God Himself. 'He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to *this*, that God is true.' Alford explains verse 32 by saying, '*No one comparatively*—receives his testimony:' and on verse 33 he remarks, 'This exception shows the correctness of the sense just assigned to *no man*.' But surely if 'few' had been meant, the words 'no man' would not have been used.

If Jesus was indeed a messenger from God, it followed that his message was God's word. 'For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.' Nor can they be either half-truths, or a blending of truth with error, as though God had taught the messenger something, but not all. 'For he giveth not the Spirit by measure.' The Revisers have here made two alterations: 'he giveth' for 'God giveth,' following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.; and they omit the closing words 'unto him,' which are in the Authorised Version but not in the original. Alford observes: 'The Rabbinical books say that the Holy Spirit was only given to the prophets by measure.' He adds: 'We must not understand the assertion generally, but apply "to Him" as has usually been done.' That probably is the sense, but we are glad to dispense with these italicised additions.

The Baptist saw in Jesus, not a servant but a Son, of God, blessed with the Father's love and endowed with all the Father's possessions. 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.' What superlative ideas had the Baptist respecting the nature, dignity, wisdom and power of Jesus! He is set forth as the object of men's

3 John 36

faith, and as imparting to them an existence prolonged to the utmost. 'He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life.' Dr. Young renders this expression, here and elsewhere, 'life age-during.' Men must accept him as their Ruler, or lose this gift; and disobedience to him is disobedience to God, and leaves a man under the curse of God. 'But he that obeyeth not (or, believeth not) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Alford explains: 'The word rendered "believeth not" may mean "disobeyeth," and is so rendered Rom. ii. 8; x. 21: 1 Pet. ii. 7, and elsewhere.'

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On the above verses 31 to 36, Alford has a note to this effect: 'Many modern critics maintain that after ver. 30 we have the words not of the Baptist, but of the Evangelist. Lücke and De Wette assume that the Evangelist has put his own thoughts into the Baptist's mouth, or at least mixed them with his words. The reason of this arbitrary hypothesis is (a) that the sentiments of the following verses seem to them not to be congruous with the time and position of the Baptist. (b) That the diction and sentiments of the following verses are so entirely in the style of our Evangelist.' Against this argument Alford relies chiefly on 'the inner coherence of the discourse itself.' More than this: in 1 John 15—18 is a declaration of the Baptist ending thus: 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' Here is precisely the same strain of thought as we find in verses 32 to 35 of chapter 3, and the mention of 'the wrath of God' in verse 36 agrees with the Baptist's expression in 3 Luke 7: 'Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' It is hardly to be supposed that a faithful historian would introduce ideas and expressions of his own into the recorded words of another. It seems much more likely that the evangelist imbibed the teachings of the Baptist, and that the striking introduction to this Gospel was in accordance therewith. But if the evangelist first learnt these mysterious truths from the Baptist, from whom did the Baptist receive them? By direct revelation from heaven? Or from the lips of Jesus? In proportion to the reverence John felt for him whom he declared to be the Lamb of God and the Son of God, would be his anxiety to hold converse with him, and to receive instruction from him. It may be anticipated that the testimony of Jesus to himself will be found to coincide with that given by these two.

1 John 1-14

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4 John 1-3

The growing popularity of Jesus was brought to the notice of the Pharisees. This fact induced Jesus to leave Judæa, and to revisit Galilee. 'When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.' Instead of 'When therefore the Lord knew,' Tischendorf reads, 'When therefore Jesus knew,' which agrees with the Sinaitic MS.

1 Mark 14

The allusion to the Pharisees appears to imply that opposition or danger was likely to be encountered by Jesus if he continued his ministry in Judæa. Probably it was about the time John was imprisoned, and that fact coupled with the hostility of the Pharisees may have decided Jesus to travel northwards. This seems to have led to the missionary tour in Galilee which we have already followed, and which Mark says was 'after that John was delivered up,' and



which Luke introduces thus: 'And Jesus returned in the power of 4 Luke 14 the Spirit into Galilee.' On the way thither the following episode occurred.

The route taken by Jesus led him through Samaria. 'And he 4 John 4 must needs pass through Samaria.' On the journey, he halted at a city the history of which carried back the mind to very ancient times. Near it lay the piece of ground which tradition recognized as having been given by the patriarch Jacob to his best-loved son, and on which there was a well still called Jacob's well. 'So he cometh .. 5 to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: and Jacob's well (Gr. spring) was there.' When Jesus reached this spot he was exhausted by the journey, and was glad to rest himself seated at the brink of the well. 'Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus (Gr. as he .. 6 was) by the well (Gr. spring).' It was about mid-day. Presently there came a woman of the country to draw water, and Jesus took the opportunity of asking her to give him a draught of the water. There was no one else to do him that service, for his disciples had gone to the city in search of food. 'It was about the sixth hour. .. 7, 8 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food.' The woman, mindful of the Jewish spirit of exclusiveness, expressed surprise at the request. 'The Samaritan .. 9 woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)' The Revisers have noted that some ancient authorities omit this last sentence. It is not in the Sinaitic MS. Tischendorf omits it. This insertion, and also the introduction of the word 'Lord' instead of 'Jesus' in verse 1, may be taken as evidences of the freedom with which transcribers dealt with the original manuscripts. They were not prevented by any superstitious ideas of 'inspiration' from exercising an honest and impartial judgment with respect to such explanations, additions or omissions as the sense of the narrative appeared to them to require.

Jesus had more than a common answer for the woman. His thirst, indeed, craved the water: but had she known what a gift from God had been granted, and who he was who now asked that small boon from her, she would have become a suppliant to him, and he would have given her water sparkling with freshest, purest life. 'Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink: thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' The expression 'living water' bore a definite meaning in Jewish ears: 'A 4 Cant. 15 fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon.' 'They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, 2 Jer. 13 and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' 'They have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.' 'And 17 Jer. 13 it shall come to pass in that day that living waters shall go out from 11 Zech. 8 Jerusalem: half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.' 'Living water' denotes, therefore, a stream or fountain of water. So the woman understood it. Her manner became at once respectful, as bebecmed the dignity of mien and tone apparent in this stranger.

4 John 11

He spoke seriously, and yet she could not comprehend the possibility of such a thing. Where was his well of living water? No vessel was at hand, and the well must be too deep for him to have drawn from it without mechanical aid. 'The woman saith unto him, Sir (or, Lord), thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?' He claimed to be somewhat: did he mean to say that he was greater than the patriarch, who had bequeathed the well they had already, and who had found it sufficient for the needs of himself and all belonging to him? „ 12 'Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?' Could another be given? Could another be needed? Yes! said the stranger. There was in men an ever-recurring thirst; but the water which it „ 13, 14 was in his power to give would quench that thirst for ever. 'Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.' Alford renders: 'Shall thirst no more for ever;' and Young: 'Shall not thirst for ever.' Not by deadening the natural sensation, but by providing for its ceaseless and immediate satisfaction: the water once drunk would become an ever-flowing fountain within the recipient. „ 14 'But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well (Gr. spring) of water springing up into eternal life.' The Revisers have noted that in verses 6 and 14 the Greek word signifies a 'spring,' but not in verses 11 and 12. This distinction between 'well' and 'spring' is not brought out by Tischendorf, Young or Alford.

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The earnest, truthful tone of the speaker was too obvious to admit of questioning. Such a boon as that were indeed desirable. To lose the craving of thirst for ever, and be saved all her weary journeyings to the well! 'The woman saith unto him, Sir (or, Lord), give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.'

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There had been enough of figurative talk, dimly or not at all comprehended by the woman. The great Teacher touched suddenly upon the actual experiences of her life. If she would have the great gift, let her go and call her husband, that together they might receive it. „ 16 'Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.' What „ 17 a home-thrust was that! 'The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband.' Most truly said, observed the mysterious „ 18 stranger. 'Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband.' „ 18 How must his next words have startled her! 'For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly.' What could it all mean? This casual meeting with a Jew; his talk, so solemn and so strange; his dignified self-assertiveness; his abrupt transition to her personal experiences; that sudden look and word of his, which pierced to her heart like a lightning-flash, revealing in an instant the chequered history of her past life, and the secret of the present which she would fain have hidden! The conviction dawned upon her that this marvellous stranger was a prophet, with the highest of a prophet's gifts of „ 19 teaching and of intuition. 'The woman saith unto him, Sir (or, Lord), I perceive that thou art a prophet.' His highly figurative

language had been designed to convey some religious teaching. Her knowledge upon such subjects enabled her to recognize the fundamental difference in creed between Jews and Samaritans. 'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' That, she thought, must be the point towards which the discourse of this Jewish Teacher tended. But he at once repudiated the idea, and solemnly assured her that a time was coming when their worship of the Father would be altogether irrespective of locality. 'Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.' Of such a worship the Samaritans as yet were ignorant. They had no clear conception of the Deity they adored: far from recognizing him as a Father, they knew not what they adored. 'Ye worship that which ye know not.' But the Jews were better taught. Their cult was well defined; the object of their worship was no unknown God. 'We worship that which we know.' From the Jews, therefore, the salvation of the world must come. 'For salvation is from the Jews:' literally, says Alford, 'the salvation cometh of the Jews.' Here, as elsewhere, we must interpret the word 'salvation' by the context, for the significance of the term varies constantly. What is here alluded to is 'salvation' from such blind, ignorant worship as was rendered by the Samaritans to—Something, they knew not what. But national religious distinctions were on the point of being abolished, and all real worshippers would render to the heavenly Father a spiritual and true homage. 'But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' That was the kind of worship the Father was anxious to receive: 'For the Father also seeks them who worship him to be such.' That is Tischendorf's rendering, agreeing with Alford's: 'Such the Father also seeketh them that worship him to be.' The Revised Version, however, is as follows, corresponding nearly with the Authorised Version: 'For such doth the Father seek (or, For such the Father also seeketh) to be his worshippers.' The difference between the two renderings is that one represents God as desiring to find worshippers of that kind, and the other as desiring that all who do worship him should render him worship of that kind. And this statement Jesus followed up by a saying of deepest meaning and sublimity. 'God is a Spirit (or, God is spirit).' God, Lord, Ruler, Father: the terms are synonymous, and alike denote Spirit, Will, intelligent, responsible, loving Rulership. Power, though it be infinite, is not God, but the Spirit wielding power is God. A steam-hammer, once made, might last for ages, and, directed in a certain way, crush with irresistible force; but without the guiding Spirit it would be powerless. Man is a God to the steam-hammer he has made. Man is a God to the lower animals he has brought into subjection to his will. A King is God and Lord to the people who render him the homage of obedience. The father is a God to the child who yields to his will. The husband may be a God to the wife, 'as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.' The Supreme God may have an infinity of attributes, but the essence of all Godhead is Spirit. So, man has bodily faculties, but essentially is spirit, and in spirit only can he worship the heavenly Father. The posing of the limbs, the opening of the lips, the up-

4 John 20

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3 i. Pet. 4

lifting of the voice, are but adjuncts to devotion ; they are of worth only as directed by the Will, without which there can be no true worship, but only the show of it. Indeed, the idea of divine worship may be dissociated from acts of prayer and praise, just as an earthly monarch may be really worshipped by his subjects, in the sense of obedience to his laws, zeal for his honour, and devotion to his service, though they may never present a petition to him or join in singing a national anthem. It is the frame of mind, the manner of life, sincerity of purpose in the sight of God which must constitute our worship of Him. ‘God is spirit : and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’

1 John 24

How little could the Samaritan woman enter into all this ! This Jewish prophet had intimated to her the need of a change in her countrymen’s religious views and practices : she had been taught to look for a Messiah, and when he came he would make all things clear to them. ‘The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ) : when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.’ Jesus at that moment was fulfilling this office of the Messiah. ‘Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.’ Did he really mean that he was the foretold Messiah ? She had no opportunity of asking him, for at that point the conversation was interrupted by the return of his disciples. ‘And upon this came his disciples.’ Great was their surprise at finding him engaged in earnest conversation with a strange woman. ‘And they marvelled that he was speaking with a woman.’ No one of them ventured, however, to ask of the woman what was her object in addressing him, or of him what was his reason for talking to her. ‘Yet no man said, What seekest thou ? or, Why speakest thou with her ?’ The impression left upon her mind by the closing words of Jesus must have been deepened when she saw him surrounded by his band of disciples, all treating him with the deference due to a recognized Teacher. She left her water-jug, probably that they might make use of it, returned to the city, and invited those she found there to come and have a look at a wonderful man who had told her all the secrets of her life. ‘So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, who told me all things that *ever* I did.’ Tischendorf omits the italicised ‘ever :’ the insertion of the word was not necessary. Such an unprecedented power of insight could not but excite her astonishment and admiration, and it had prepared the way for her reception of his claim to the Messiahship. She would not assert any belief in the fact, but she broached it as a subject for enquiry : ‘Can this be the Christ ?’ Tischendorf, Young and Alford render, ‘Is this the Christ ?’ The Authorised Version stands, ‘Is not this the Christ ?’ The ‘not’ should be omitted, but the Revisers’ rendering implies the existence of doubt or hesitation, which the woman could scarcely have intended to convey. The Greek : *mēti houtos estin ho Christos*, is rendered in ‘The Englishman’s Greek New Testament,’ ‘Perchance this is the Christ ;’ but in the other 14 passages in which the adverb *mēti* occurs, although used interrogatively it never implies doubt, but the contrary, as in the passages : ‘Do *men* gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ?’ ‘Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized ?’ The woman’s words excited the curiosity of the listeners, and they set out to see

7 Mat. 16

10 Acts 47



and judge for themselves. 'They went out of the city, and were 4 John 20 coming to him.'

Jesus appears to have remained thoughtful and abstracted, so that the disciples found it necessary to rouse his attention to the fact that the food they had brought was ready for him to partake of. 'In the .. 31  
meanwhile the disciples prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat.' But, rapt and preoccupied, he put aside the invitation, saying merely that he had food for himself which they were ignorant of. 'But he said unto .. 32  
them, I have meat to eat that ye know not.' They were surprised at the remark, and began to ask one another whether any one of them had previously brought him food. 'The disciples therefore said one .. 33  
to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?' Jesus explained his meaning. His work was his nourishment. He needed nothing more or better than to do God's will and complete God's work. 'Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that .. 34  
sent me, and to accomplish his work.' His heart and mind were glowing with enthusiasm. Were they not saying that it wanted yet four months to harvest time? 'Say ye not, There are yet four .. 35  
months, and *then* cometh the harvest?' Not so: if, instead of judging the present by the past, they would use their own eyesight and look closely, they would discern already indications of ripening in the crop. The harvest would come much sooner than ordinary experiences would lead men to believe. 'Behold, I say unto you, Lift up .. 36  
your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white unto harvest.' Nay, more than that! Already there was a reaper in the field, earning his wages, and gathering in food to provide for an age-during life. 'Already he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit .. 37  
unto life eternal.' Jesus himself was the reaper, first in the field, already earning his 'meat to eat,' and able to show his reapings. The Reaper and the Sower, the Sender and the Sent, were alike rejoicing. 'That he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.' In .. 38  
this case the saying held good, that the sower and the reaper are different persons. 'For herein is the saying true, One soweth and .. 39  
another reapeth.' Tischendorf and Young render; 'One is the sower, and another the reaper.' They are not fellow labourers, for the actions cannot be performed simultaneously. Now was the reaping season. Jesus had called his disciples to the labour of ingathering, a work wholly different in character from that of the sowing which had been performed by others. 'I sent you to reap that whereon ye .. 40  
have not laboured: others have laboured, and ye are entered into their labour.'

But why this burst of enthusiastic rejoicing? What had Jesus on a sudden done or gained, that his heart and lips should thus overflow with gladness? He had simply found in the Samaritan woman a ready listener to his teaching. Was a woman of such antecedents, and of such a stamp of intellect, a convert to be proud of? It may have been precisely that in her which seemed so low, so faulty, so obtuse, over which he rejoiced to have triumphed. If his words could reach the soul of such an one, his influence over the minds of multitudes was well assured. Here, at the beginning of his ministry, he found the chords in human hearts respond and vibrate to his touch; he had the consciousness of being able to accomplish the work which had been given him to do.

The woman set herself to spread abroad his fame. A man who could read, as he had done, her life's history, must surely be well worth listening to, be he Teacher, Prophet or Christ. As such he was accepted by many, in faith on her testimony. 'And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that *ever* I did.'

The curiosity which at first led the Samaritans to seek Jesus at the well soon deepened into a reverential feeling. He gained such an influence over them that they asked him to stay in their city. He therefore remained with them two days. 'So when the Samaritans came unto him, they besought him to abide with them: and he abode there two days.' The time appears to have been spent by him in discoursing with them. His words brought conviction to many minds. It would seem that he dwelt still upon the topic that 'Salvation is from the Jews,' and that through him it would be given to the world. 'And many more believed because of his word: and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.' The words 'the Christ' are here omitted by the Revisers, according to the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.

We must needs pause here to reflect on the probable origin of this vivid and interesting narrative. Inspirationists may be content to regard its authorship as settled, though how or why it would be hard to say. They seem to accept the account without enquiry, as if it had been dropped from the sky, dictated by the Holy Ghost, and written down for our use without the possibility of flaw or error. But common sense and sound criticism find cause to ponder the matter. Who first compiled the narrative? Jesus alone was with the Samaritan woman. It follows that either he or she must have handed down the conversation. One of the disciples must have noted down, probably at the time, the peculiar thoughts and words of Jesus; the account is evidently from an eye-witness, who saw Jesus sitting tired by the well, saw the woman leave her water-jug and go to the city, saw the Samaritans come to Jesus, heard them entreat him to stay, and the words in which they confirmed the woman's judgment. The other particulars the writer most likely obtained from her direct. The idea of anyone forging such a tale as this, is, on the face of it, preposterous. We owe no small debt of gratitude to the unknown scribe who has preserved these precious records of the doctrines enunciated by Jesus.

At the end of the two days Jesus quitted the friendly Samaritans. The warmth of their reception and their enthusiastic faith in him, exceeded anything he had met with or hoped for from his own countrymen. He declared that to be the common lot of prophets: in Judæa he had succeeded in gaining disciples, but he had received no honour from the Pharisees, and he was now withdrawing himself from their observation. 'And after the two days he went forth from thence into Galilee. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.' Therefore his best way of gaining influence would be to go from place to place, for he was little likely to obtain anywhere the recognition and honour due to an established Teacher. Alford alludes to 'the difficulties which have been found in the connexion of this verse;' and he arrives at the following

apparent solution of them. 'The reason why Jesus left Judæa for Galilee was, because of the publicity which was gathering round himself and his ministry. He betakes himself to Galilee therefore, to avoid fame, testifying that his own country (Galilee) was that where, as a prophet, He was least likely to be honoured. The above explanation seems to me completely satisfactory.' That opinion appears too fanciful and far-fetched to be correct, especially as the next verse alludes to the reception of Jesus by the Galileans on account of what he had done in Jerusalem. 'So when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.' This verse raises an interesting and important question with respect to the chronological arrangement of the gospel narratives.

It seems to have been the object of Luke in drawing up his history to make it as consecutive as possible: 'to write unto thee in order.' Alford admits this by his note: 'in order, *i.e.* consecutively.' But then, strangely enough, he explains this away by saying: 'By this word we must not understand St. Luke to lay claim to any *especial chronological accuracy in writing*; which indeed is not found in his Gospel. He *traced* the events in order as they happened; but he may *have arranged* them as other considerations led him.' Luke, however, professed not only to have traced but also to write all things 'in order.' Here is the Revised Version: 'It seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order.' He is the only evangelist who expresses that intention; his narrative is the fullest; and we may conclude that he endeavoured to arrange the materials before him in proper sequence. But he, and also Matthew and Mark, seemed to have lacked certain information which has been transmitted in John's gospel. The first journey of Jesus to Galilee related by Matthew and Mark is that which took place after the Baptist's imprisonment, as they state expressly. Luke does not say so, but his narrative with respect to that journey appears to coincide with theirs. John, however, tells us that Jesus, immediately after his baptism, 'was minded to go forth into Galilee;' and he went to Cana and Capernaum, but not for 'many days.' We are told that afterwards he went with his disciples into Judæa, still before the imprisonment of the Baptist. Thence he returned, as we have seen, through Samaria to Galilee, and was welcomed by the Galileans. Not a hint of this first journey to and from Galilee is given by the other evangelists, unless it be in 4 Luke 44. If the true reading there is Judæa, it follows that Luke knew of the journey, though he gives no details respecting it. Now comes a question as to the proper sequence of John's narrative. He attributes the reception of Jesus by the Galileans to their having attended the feast in Jerusalem and there witnessed everything which Jesus did during the festival. And before the account of the abode of Jesus in Judæa and his return to Galilee, which is given in the latter portion (from verse 22) of the third chapter and in the fourth chapter (to verse 45), we read in the second chapter (verses 13 to 25) and in the first portion of the third chapter (verses 1 to 21), the account of a visit of Jesus to the passover at Jerusalem, the expulsion by him from the temple of the traffickers and their belongings, a discussion between him and the Jews, the favour and

4 John 45

1 Luke 3

4 Mat. 12

1 Mark 14

4 Luke 14-15

1 John 43

2 John 1, 12

3 John 22-24

4 John 1-4

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confidence of many shown towards him, the determination of Jesus not to trust to this popular feeling in his favour, and a long and startling discourse with Nicodemus. The position which the account of these things occupies in the narrative has led to its being taken for granted that they were prior to the events related subsequently in the same gospel. It has consequently been assumed that the incident known as 'the cleansing of the temple' occurred twice, at the beginning and towards the close of the ministry of Jesus. In the 'Harmony of the Gospels' in the 'Teachers Bible,' the events stand as follows.

First miracle at Cana . . . . .	2	John 1—11
Visit to Capernaum . . . . .	2	„ 12
First passover; first cleansing of temple	2	„ 13—23
Discourse with Nicodemus . . . . .	3	„ 1—21
The Baptist's last testimony . . . . .	3	„ 25—36
Christ's visit to Samaria . . . . .	4	„ 1—42
Christ's return to Cana . . . . .	4	„ 43—46
Christ's healing of nobleman's son . . . . .	4	„ 46—54
Imprisonment of John the Baptist . . . . .	4	Mat. 12, 1 Mark 14

In favour of that arrangement it may be urged:

- (1) The account of the ministry of Jesus in Judæa prior to the imprisonment of the Baptist is prefaced by the words: 'After these things,' that is, as the narrative stands, after the cleansing of the temple and the discourse with Nicodemus.  
3 John 22
- (2) In explanation of the reception of Jesus by the Galileans it is stated that they had been up with him to the feast, and had seen what he had done in Jerusalem.  
4 John 45
- (3) From which the conclusion may be drawn, that the narrative is intended to be consecutive, and the allusion respecting the Galileans refers to the cleansing of the temple.  
„ 45

But there are various objections to this:

- (4) The expression 'after these things' denotes, indeed, a sequence of events, and it frequently occurs in John's gospel: iii. 22, v. 1, vi. 1, vii. 1, xix. 38, xxi. 21. These seem to have been intended for divisions of the narrative, as we divide it into chapters. The misplacing of a particular division, they being unnumbered, might easily occur. The section containing the account of the cleansing of the temple, and that relating to the conversation with Nicodemus, are introduced without reference to any particular period, and might fit into any portion of the narrative. 'And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.' 'There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night.'  
2 John 13  
3 John 1
- (5) It appears, however, that certain acts had been performed by Jesus in Jerusalem which led the Galileans to welcome him. 'The Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast.' That can scarcely refer to the one act of cleansing the temple; but it may refer to the verse which immediately follows that account: 'Now when he was in Jerusalem during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did.' Taking that  
4 John 45  
2 John 23



view, it is probable that there are here put together events occurring in different years, the cleansing of the temple, because it also referred to a passover time, and the discourse with Nicodemus, because it alludes to the signs done by Jesus.

- (6) As regards the incident in the temple, Matthew relates that Jesus cast out sellers and buyers, and overthrew the money changers' tables and the seats of the sellers of doves. <sup>21 Mat. 12</sup> Mark's <sup>11 Mark 15</sup> account is to the same effect, with the addition that he would not suffer any one to carry a vessel through the temple. Luke's account is more condensed: 'he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold.' <sup>19 Luke 45</sup> John's account is as follows: 'And he found in the temple those that <sup>2 John 14-16</sup> sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and to them that sold the doves he said, 'Take these things hence.' This account is fuller, but there is nothing to lead to the conclusion that a different event is described, except the mere fact of the position it occupies in John's gospel.

- (7) Too much stress has been laid upon that. Glancing down the 'Harmony of the Gospels,' we find that John's is taken consecutively, without an exception, whereas there are displacements in Matthew and Mark. In Matthew portions of chapters 10, 8 and 11 intervene between 12 and 13; 8, 9 and 10 between 13 and 14; 26 between 20 and 21; in Mark, verse 1 of chapter 6 follows verse 14 of chapter 1, and chapter 14 comes between 10 and 11. Why should not a similar exercise of judgment be adopted in dealing with John's gospel, and his narrative of the cleansing of the temple be placed in the position which accords with the other three evangelists?

- (8) Moreover, it has not, in fact, been found possible to take John's gospel in regular sequence without an omission. The harmonisers have omitted verses 22 and 23 of chapter 3: apparently for the following reason. Chapter 2, verse 14, represents Jesus as going to Jerusalem: then follows the cleansing of the temple and the interview with Nicodemus, immediately after which we read: 'And after these things came Jesus and <sup>3 John 22</sup> his disciples into the land of Judea.' From Jerusalem to Judea! That is equivalent to saying from York to Yorkshire. Obviously the narrative at this point is not consecutive.

Jesus, having returned to Galilee, visited again the place where he had performed his first miracle. 'He came therefore again unto <sup>4 John 46</sup> Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine.' We are told nothing as to the nature of the signs or miracles which had been wrought by Jesus during the feast at Jerusalem. We know only that the Galileans who had gone to the feast had witnessed them. The report of them, or, it may be, the sight of them, led a person of some rank, (a 'courtier'—Young), to apply to him on behalf of his dying child. He doubted not the power of Jesus to restore him to health, and besought him to do so, albeit the invalid was already at

4 John 40, 47 death's door. 'And there was a certain nobleman (or, king's officer), whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought *him* that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.' The reply of Jesus was peculiar. 'Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.' The Revisers have changed the word 'then' of the Authorised Version into 'therefore.' Tischendorf and Young retain 'then.' The significance of the observation does not lie upon the surface. Alford says: 'The charge brought against them . . . does not imply, as some think, that they would not believe signs and wonders *heard of*, but required to *see* them—for in this case the expression would certainly have been fuller, "see with your own eyes," or something similar. . . . The words imply the contrast between the Samaritans, who believed *because of His word*, and the Jews (the *plural* reckoning the noblemen among them), who would not believe but *through signs and prodigies*.' This explanation is not satisfactory. There is no allusion to, or question about, Samaritans and Jews, and Alford could only say, 'The man seems to have been a Jew: see below;' that is, the idea of his being a Jew was based only upon the supposition that the reference might be to the assumed distinction between Jews and Samaritans. Neither can Jesus be alluding to any want of belief in himself: for the man could not have sought his help if he had not believed in the ability of Jesus to do what he asked him. We must needs take the words in a general sense, the context supplying no particular application. The observation would seem to be a reflection rising in the mind of Jesus out of the circumstances of the case. Here is a child almost dying, and the father trembling for its life. Why this dread of death? Why this want of confidence in God when death comes? Men trust to Him and His life-giving power no farther than they can have ocular demonstration. They must see signs of life, or some marvellous restoration of its failing powers, otherwise they cannot believe in it, cannot confide in God: 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.' Whether the anxious father understood the drift of the remark in this or any other sense, we know not; probably his soul was too troubled to grasp any idea except the one which had taken possession of his mind—the possibility of his child's recovery through the wonder-working power of Jesus. All else is as nothing to him; he can only urge again, and with increased earnestness, his request for the presence of Jesus without delay, while yet there is time to save the swiftly ebbing life.

49 'The nobleman saith unto him, Sir (or, Lord), come down ere my child die.' That cry of anguish was met by a prompt and sympathetic answer.

50 'Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth.' What wonderful words are these! Let the father go back alone: no need for Jesus to accompany him. The healing influence was already at work; the life of the child was safe! There was that in the tone and manner of the Speaker which dispelled all doubt, and brought conviction to the mind of the petitioner. With that assurance he was content to depart alone.

51 'The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way.' And good news met him on the road: his slaves had been sent in search of him, that he might learn at the earliest moment possible that the

crisis of the disease had passed and his son was out of danger. ‘And as he was now going down, his servants (Gr. bond-servants) met him, saying, that his son lived.’ It was natural he should ask when this change for the better took place. ‘So he inquired of them the hour when he began to amend.’ He ascertained that it was on the previous day, about the very time when Jesus had given him the positive and comforting assurance. ‘They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ The coincidence was marvellous, preternatural: but our conclusions must not be suffered to outrun the narrative. There is nothing in it to justify the assertion by us that the cure was wrought by Jesus. We are too ignorant to say positively whether this was or was not the case. At the least, there was evinced superhuman knowledge on the part of Jesus. That gift of prescience which Nathanael was so amazed to find in him, may have revealed to Jesus the fact that his presence was not needed, health being assured to the child without his intervention. All the father could do, was to recognize the close connection between the giving of the assurance and the passing away of the fever. It was not for him, it is not for us, to pierce the mystery, as though the cause and the effect had been revealed to us. There was enough to justify the profoundest faith in Jesus. The joyful father told the circumstances to his wondering household, and he and all about him believed in Jesus. ‘So the father knew that it *was* at that hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.’ There seems no reason for supposing this to mean that they became disciples of Jesus, in any formal way; we understand the word ‘believed’ here to be the equivalent of ‘confided:’ to believe in a man is to trust in him wholly, to feel assured that his word and actions may be relied on, and that he is incapable of making any false pretensions.

The details of this narrative must have been gathered at the time the event happened. The place—Cana; the status of the applicant—a nobleman; his abode—Capernaum; the application to Jesus; his striking comment on the request; the second entreaty of the father; the assurance by which it was followed; the man’s departure; the meeting with his servants; and the faith of his household: all these particulars must have been compiled by one who was in close attendance upon Jesus, and who followed up his own observation by further enquiries at the time. We find, indeed, that he was sufficiently conversant with the details of Jesus’ journeyings and actions to be able to tell us that this was the second in order of the miracles which he performed after his arrival from Judea. ‘This is again the second sign that Jesus did, having come out of Judea into Galilee.’ The word ‘again’ seems to refer to something prior: possibly the change of water into wine, which occurred in the same place, and, as on this occasion, almost immediately after his return from Judea.

Cana was about fifteen miles from Capernaum. That a man, under the pressure of his domestic sorrow, should leave the bedside of his darling boy, and travel that distance to find Jesus and implore his help, shows what fame and influence he had already gained. Evidently we have but the merest outline of the sayings and doings of the Great Teacher. Of the nature of his religious teachings in Judea and Galilee we have yet learnt but little. Matthew thus sum-



4 Mat. 17

marises them : 'From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say ; Repent ye : for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Dr. Young gives the rendering thus : 'Reform : for the reign of the heavens hath come.' Reformation of life was the great theme : changed conduct for changed times. The frame of mind and style of life which will pass muster on earth, will not suffice for the higher laws of heavenly rule.

5 John 1

John's gospel carries us back suddenly to Judea, but the period in which the incidents next related occurred is uncertain. The Authorised Version begins chapter 5 with the words, 'After this,' which have been altered to 'After these things' by the Revisers, Alford, Tischendorf and Young. Alford shows the importance of the alteration by quoting the remark of Lücke, 'that when John wishes to indicate immediate succession, he uses *after this* (or *that*) ; ch. ii. 12 ; xi. 7, 11 ; xix. 28 ; when mediate, after an interval, *after these things*, ch. iii. 22 ; v. 14 ; vi. 1 ; vii. 1 ; xix. 38.' 'After these things there was a feast of the Jews ; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.' Alford observes : 'Few points have been more controverted, than the question, *what this feast was*.' The oldest MS., the Sinaitic, has 'the feast,' which is adopted by Tischendorf. The Revisers note : 'Many ancient authorities read *the feast*.' The evangelist here introduces a

2 necessary explanation. 'Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep *gate* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches.' The Revisers note : 'Some ancient authorities read *Bethsaida*, others *Bethzatha*.' The former is in the Vatican MS., the

3 latter (which is adopted by Tischendorf) in the Sinaitic MS. 'In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered.' The Revisers, following the two oldest MSS., have omitted 'great' before 'multitude.' Among the crowd was a man who had been a sufferer nearly forty years. The evangelist was able to state the exact

5 period. 'And a certain man was there, which had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity.' This seems to indicate some general debility, rather than a local deformity. Young renders it by the expression, 'in feeble health.' The attention of Jesus was attracted to the man, and having been told of his prolonged suffering, Jesus enquired of him

6 whether he was desirous of restored health. 'When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he said unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole ?' Young renders 'Knew' by 'having known,' which points to information obtained. There is no reason for assuming that Jesus manifested preternatural knowledge of the man's history. Alford simply guesses when he says positively : '*Knew*, namely *within Himself*, as on other similar occasions. Our Lord singled him out, being conscious of the circumstances under which he lay there, by that superhuman knowledge of which we had so striking an example in the case of the woman of Samaria.' The evangelist does not hint at anything of the kind, nor is such an inference necessarily to be drawn from the narrative. Luther did not so interpret it : he translates 'knew' by 'vernahm,' which is equivalent to 'understood.' In reply to the question of Jesus the invalid explained that he lacked the assistance of some friendly hand to place him in the pool, and thereby lost his chance of being among the foremost at the time when the water was agitated.

7 'The sick man answered him, Sir (or, Lord), I have no man, when



the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.' Here, for once, the Revisers have given the alternative renderings 'Sir' and 'Lord.' But they seem to have done this only because they inserted the former in the text ; on various other occasions they omit to note that the words are interchangeable. Instead of 'when the water is troubled,' Tischendorf renders, 'when the water has been troubled ;' Young, 'when the water may be troubled ;' Luther, 'wenn das Wasser sich beweget,' 'when the water moves itself.' No allusion to anything supernatural is here insinuated. So the narrative stood originally up to this point. Let us consider what conclusions it involves. A crowd of sick persons were found assembled in one place. They may have been there habitually, or—which seems more probable—some special occasion must have drawn so many together at one time to one particular spot. The words, 'I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool,' show that the invalids went thither for the purpose of immersion. The 'troubling' of the water indicates an occasional disturbance or turbidity, probably owing to the outburst of some subterranean spring, at which period it was found to possess a healing virtue, lasting, however, but a short time, so that speedy immersion was imperatively required. Probably, also, the area was limited, so that only one or two persons at a time could enter the water. Alford explains : 'Robinson established by personal inspection the fact of the subterranean connection of the pool of Siloam and that called the Fountain of the Virgin ; and has made it probable that the Fountain under the grand Mosk is also connected with them ; in fact that all these are but one and the same spring. Now this spring, as he himself witnessed, is an *intermittent* one, as indeed had been reported before by Jerome, Prudentius, William of Tyre, and others. There might have been then, it is obvious, some artificially constructed basin in connexion with this spring, the site and memory of which have perished, which would present the phenomenon here described. I have received an interesting communication from a traveller who believes that he has identified Bethesda in the present pool of Siloam. It appears from his account that there are still visible four bases of pillars in the middle of the water, and four corresponding ones in the wall, showing that at one time the pool has been arched over by five equal porches. This pool is, as above noticed, intermittent, and is even now believed to possess a certain medicinal power.'

Early commentators were not content to leave the narrative in the uncertainty in which they found it. Glosses grew up around the text, which were in accordance with the spirit of the times. The Revisers have omitted these. There was an addition made to verse 3 : 'waiting for the moving of the water.' These words do not appear in the two oldest MSS. In the Alexandrine, which is the third in antiquity, they were inserted, but had been erased by a later hand. The Alexandrine MS. adds : 'An angel of the Lord washed at a certain season,' but there is nothing of the kind in the two older MSS., and all three MSS. are without the following words, which are verse 4 of the Authorised version : 'For an angel of the Lord went down 5 John 4 at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden.' The Revisers have banished

this and the former ending of verse 3 to the margin, noting that 'many ancient authorities insert (it) wholly or in part.' Tischendorf follows the two oldest MSS., omitting the glosses entirely. Alford says: 'The spuriousness of this controverted passage can hardly be questioned. . . . The Vatican, Paris, Cambridge, and Sinaitic MSS. omit it.'

5 John 8 What it was hoped the water might do, Jesus did by a word. 'Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.' The command was threefold: 'arise'—the man could do so; 'take up thy bed'—that instruction he could obey; 'and walk'—that also he found to be within his power. 'And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.' Tischendorf, following the oldest MS., omits the word 'straightway,' which stands in the Authorised Version 'immediately.' This cure was effected on the sabbath. 'Now it was the sabbath on that day.' The man, carrying his bed, was at once taken to task by his countrymen for so doing. 9 Their punctiliousness was scandalized by such an action. 'So the Jews said unto him, that was cured, It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.' Alford explains: '*The Jews*, never the *multitude*, but always those in authority of some kind, whom John ever puts forward as the representatives of the whole people in their rejection of the Lord.' That is Alford's way of accounting for the frequent use of the word 'Jews.' Elsewhere also he explains it as 'designating the official body.' The term is never applied by the evangelist except to those of Jerusalem and the neighbourhood. This might be as a distinction from Gentiles, the Romans being there in great numbers; but much more probably the title of Jews denoted Israelites inhabiting Judea or Jewry. Those 'in authority,' 'the representatives of the people,' 'the official body,' are described as being the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, who, as a matter of course, were Jews, the Jewish authority, civil and religious, being centred in the metropolis of Judea. In self-justification, the man threw the responsibility of the action complained of on the person who, having restored his strength, had bidden him exercise it in that manner. 11 'But he answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.' About the cure the man spoke of, they troubled not themselves; but they were most anxious to ascertain by whom such an infraction of 12 the sabbath day's rest had been authorised. 'They asked him, Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up *thy bed*, and walk.' The Revisers have done service by italicising 'thy bed,' which was not done in the Authorised Version. They appear to have adopted the Sinaitic reading, which omits those words. Tischendorf renders, 'Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up, and walk.' That is preferable, being equivalent to, Who bade thee lift and carry? That question the man could not answer, for he had had no previous knowledge of Jesus, who had at once passed from him and become lost in the crowd. 13 'But he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place.' Alford renders: 'Jesus passed away from him,' and observes: 'His fame had not been so spread yet, but that he might during the crowd of strangers at the feast pass unnoticed. Jesus *passed on unobserved* by him: just spoke the healing words, and then went on among the

crowd : so that no particular attention was attracted to Himself, either by the sick man or others. *The context requires* this interpretation : being violated by the ordinary one, that Jesus conveyed himself away, because a multitude was in the place : for that would imply that attention had been attracted towards him which he wished to avoid : and in that case he could hardly fail to have been known to the man and to others.' Subsequently Jesus met the man in the temple. 'Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple.' The Revisers have retained the word 'afterward,' but Tischendorf, Alford and Young agree in rendering it 'after these things.' The word 'findeth' may imply that Jesus sought the man out. Jesus seems to have feared lest the man should misuse his restored health, and thereby fall into a worse state than before, and he warned him seriously on the matter. 'And said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee.' Alford probably goes a step too far in saying, 'The knowledge of our Lord extended even to the sin committed thirty-eight years ago, from which this long sickness had resulted, for so it is implied here.' Ordinary discernment, and reports current of the invalid's previous career, might suffice for such knowledge, without assuming it to be supernatural. As soon as the man knew who his Benefactor was, he communicated his name to those who had been anxious to ascertain it. 'The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.' The Sabbatarians had no eyes or ears for anything outside their own hard and fast lines of duty. They raised, in some form, an accusation against Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker. 'And for this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath.' The Revisers and Tischendorf have omitted the words, 'and sought to slay him,' on the authority of the two oldest MSS. They have also altered 'had done' into 'did.' Young renders, 'because these things he was doing.' Jesus defended and justified his conduct. The evangelist has recorded his reply in one sentence, a very remarkable one, which may either have been all that Jesus said, or the concentration of a whole discourse into its leading argument. 'But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work.' The Revisers have rendered 'hitherto' of the Authorised Version by 'even until now.' Tischendorf renders : 'My Father works until now, and I work.' Young : 'My Father till now worketh, and I work.' The idea conveyed seems to be this : that God having carried on since the creation the ordering of the world for man, Jesus had now taken up that work of divine beneficence, supplementing it by his labours of teaching and healing. The work of creation was ended once for all : 'On the seventh day, God finished his work which he had made ; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.' But the work of Providence, of rectification and interference on behalf of mankind, never ceases : there is no sabbath with respect to it. The Jews were shocked at the tone of the reply, and by the inferences deducible from it. He had spoken of God as his Father, and of himself as performing the work of God, thereby claiming for himself an equality with the divine nature and power. 'For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal

5 John 14

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2 Gen. 2

5 John 18



5 John 19

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with God.' This being the first time the evangelist has alluded to any attempt on the life of Jesus, we can only explain the statement that 'the Jews sought the more to kill him,' by assuming that their 'persecution' of him for sabbath-breaking was a charge which involved capital punishment. Possibly this conclusion led to the introduction in verse 16 of the words, 'and sought to slay him,' which are now discarded as a gloss. Jesus being again threatened, again defended himself. This evangelist has preserved the long and wonderful discourse delivered by Jesus on the occasion. He began by asserting, with solemn emphasis, that as Son of God it was not possible for him to do more than imitate his Father's mode and manner of working. 'Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing.' The Revisers and Tischendorf use the word 'doing' instead of 'do,' which is in the Authorised Version. Young renders: 'The Son is not able to do anything of himself, if he may not see the Father doing anything.' There is an essential oneness of design and similarity of action. 'For what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner.' The word 'likewise' of the Authorised Version might be taken to mean simply 'also,' and is replaced by the words 'in like manner' by the Revisers, Tischendorf and Young. Jesus was conscious of the Father's love towards him, and of divine tuition and guidance in all he undertook. 'For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth.' The will and power of God were the only limitations in the career of Jesus. The miracles he had been enable to perform pointed to the possibility and certainty of yet greater marvels. 'And greater works than these will he shew him, that ye may marvel.' Even the renewal of life was within the power of Jesus. 'For as the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom he will.' This is rendered by Young: 'For, as the Father raiseth the dead, and maketh alive, so also the Son maketh alive whom he will.' Luther's version is: 'Denn wie der Vater die Todten auferwecket, und macht sie lebendig, also auch der Sohn macht lebendig, welche er will.' 'For as the Father wakes up the dead, and makes them living, thus also the Son makes living those he will.' Even his judicial power God had delegated to His Son, thereby making him the arbiter of human destiny. 'For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son:' which is rendered by Young: 'For the Father doth not even judge any one, but all the judgment hath given to the Son.' The Son is thus equal in dignity to the Father. 'That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.' Failure of respect to the Son as ambassador, is dishonour to the Father whom he represents. 'He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent him.'

In pondering this and other discourses of Jesus we must be careful to take the ideas in their proper sequence. Having alluded to the resurrection of the dead and a judgment to come, Jesus goes on to speak of a future life and of immunity from judgment. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment.' The Revisers and Tischendorf have omitted the word 'on' after 'believeth,' and have adopted the present tense, 'cometh not,' for the



future, 'shall not come.' The expression 'heareth my word' obviously denotes acceptance of the teaching and submission to the rule of Jesus: in modern phraseology the equivalent would be, 'He who obeys me, and trusts him who sent me.' But to get at the true and full sense, we must take Young's literal rendering: 'Verily, verily, I say to you—He who is hearing my word, and believing him who sent me, hath life age-during, and into judgment doth not come.' This clearly indicates a continuous hearing and believing: obedience to Jesus and confidence in God grown into a settled habit and conviction. The future state of existence being moulded according to the pattern of the Divine Will, the result will be 'life age-during.' It was not possible to get at the truth here expressed, so long as the words 'everlasting life' were retained, and understood as equivalent to 'endless life' or 'immortal life.' 'Age-during' denotes the perpetuation of life throughout and to the full term of a certain period. How long that appointed term may be, we cannot tell: God knoweth, and His decree is as wise and merciful as it is immutable. The aim of Jesus, as here disclosed, is to bring us into harmony with the divine purposes, thereby ensuring to us hereafter the enjoyment of life to its utmost limit. This accounts for much which is otherwise inexplicable in the teaching of Jesus. To effect his purpose, everything tending to shorten life must be eliminated from his kingdom: there must be no anxious thought or struggles about meat, drink, clothing, wealth, but a perfect reliance, in honest labour, on our heavenly Father's bounty; the feuds and passions which embitter, endanger and destroy life must be laid aside; the doctrine of passive resistance must be acquiesced in, leaving to the great Shepherd of the sheep the task of keeping out and driving away the wolves which would make his flock their prey; every vice of nature and taint of blood must be eradicated, and every virtue perfected, that nothing may be left to blight, or mar, or cut short the life which God bestows and provides for. In setting about the accomplishment of that grand design, Jesus laid his foundation broad and deep. His doctrine necessarily runs counter to human and earthly maxims; his heavenly wisdom seems folly to the world; nor can his scheme of life be realized until his Church universal, 'the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven' reaches this consummation of 'hearing his word and believing him who sent him.' 'Against such there is no law.' The Spirit of Jesus will bring 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance (or, self-control):' in such a character there will be nothing to condemn, nothing to judge, he 'cometh not into judgment.' Jesus added: 'But hath passed out of death into life.' That is the rendering of the Revisers, Tischendorf, Alford and Young, instead of the Authorised Version, 'But is passed from death unto life.' Luther's version is graphic: 'Sondern er is vom Tode zum Leben hindurch gedrungen.' 'But has pressed through from death to life.' There is a changed condition of being: as sin, judgment and death go together, so do virtue, freedom and life.

The influence of Jesus will not be restricted to the present state of existence, but extends to the dead as well as the living. 'Verily, verily, I say unto, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.'

12 Heb. 23

5 Gal. 23

5 John 24

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It is a monstrous and unwarrantable assertion of theologians, that salvation through Jesus must be accepted now or never. The few texts, misread and misapplied, adduced in support of that doctrine, do not justify such a conclusion, which is nevertheless accepted and disseminated as positively as though it were a clearly revealed gospel truth. This solemn declaration of Jesus points, to say the least, in a contrary direction. Alford's explanatory note on the words, 'the voice of the Son of God,' is as follows: 'His *call to awake*, in its widest and deepest sense:—by His own preaching, by His apostles, His ministers, &c., &c.' That idea, apart from the introduction of 'Apostles' and ministers. &c., &c.' harmonises with what precedes: 'heareth my word' and 'shall hear the voice of the Son of God,' must bear the same significance. But Alford assumes 'the dead' to mean 'the *spiritually* dead.' That is an addition to the words used by Jesus, for which there is no warrant. The human family embraces 'the living' and 'the dead,' and an allusion to 'the dead' was well understood as simply a colloquial distinction from 'the living.' For instance: 'I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.' 4 Eccl. 2

'On behalf of the living *should they seek* unto the dead?' 'That the dead are raised, even Moses shewed.' 'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?' The words 'they that hear shall live,' applied to 'the dead,' and following immediately after the expressions, 'hath age-during life' and 'hath passed out of death into life,' must surely carry the same sense: the same vivifying, life-prolonging influence, will be experienced by 'the dead.' There is the same restriction of the benefit in both verses; it is not granted to all in either case, but 'he that heareth my word . . . hath age-during life,' 'they that hear shall live.' Instead of 'they that hear,' Tischendorf renders, 'they that heard,' Alford, 'they, that have heard,' and the Englishman's Greek Testament, 'those having heard,' an alteration which the Revisers have omitted to make. The meaning comes out most clearly in Young's literal version: 'There cometh an hour, and it now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those having heard shall live.'

The life dwelling in the Father was imparted by him to the Son. 5 John 26

'For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself.' And there has been also bestowed upon the Son judicial power, he being one with mankind, the representative and Messiah of humanity. 'And he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.' The word 'also' has been omitted after 'judgment,' on the authority of the two oldest MSS. The Revisers give the alternative reading, 'a son of man.' Tischendorf and Young do not introduce either article: 'because he is Son of man;' and instead of 'execute' they introduce the word 'do.' To 'execute' judgment might be taken to signify the infliction of punishment, which is not here alluded to. Luther renders, 'Gericht halten,' 'to hold judgment,' but the Greek verb is *poieō*, which is rendered in verse 19 four times as 'do,' and which is defined as 'to execute' only in the sense of 'to make, produce.' On this subject Jesus warned his hearers against incredulity; 'Marvel not at this.' That to 'marvel' or 'wonder' was equivalent to 'disbelieve,'

appears from the following passages. ‘Behold ye among the nations, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you.’ ‘Be amazed and wonder; blind yourselves and be blind.’ Possibly the word ‘marvel’ in verse 20 also, should be so understood: ‘Greater works than these will he shew him, that ye may marvel:’ that is, works so great that you may deem them incredible. The entire verse 28 stands as follows: ‘Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice.’ Instead of the word ‘for,’ Tischendorf uses the word ‘that,’ thereby modifying considerably the drift of the passage, and bringing it into harmony with the interpretation just given to the words ‘marvel not:’ ‘Marvel not at this, that an hour is coming, in which all that are in the tombs will hear his voice.’ Young’s rendering is not inconsistent with Tischendorf’s: ‘Wonder not at this, because there cometh an hour in which all those in the tombs shall hear his voice.’ The expression, ‘the hour cometh,’ indicates an appointed time for the introduction of the event, judging from the following passages. ‘Mine hour is not yet come.’ ‘Of that day and hour knoweth no one.’ ‘In an hour that ye think not.’ In verse 25 there is an addition: ‘The hour cometh and now is:’ Jesus was on the point of preaching to the dead. But here, ‘and now is’ is not repeated: it is not, as before, ‘they that hear,’ but ‘all . . . shall hear;’ it will be a universal call, a summons which all must obey.

How are we to understand the expression, ‘all those in the tombs?’ That rendering of the Revisers agrees with Dr. Young, the Authorized Version being, ‘all that are in the graves.’ The modification is not unimportant: the omission of the word ‘are’ obviates the idea that any allusion is intended to the decaying or decomposed bodies, and makes the sentence simply equivalent to ‘all the buried.’ That must be its import, having regard equally to common sense and to the context. ‘All the dead;’ ‘all the buried;’ ‘all those in the tombs:’ the three forms carry the same meaning, and are interchangeable. But Alford assumes the contrary. He says: ‘He (Jesus) is now speaking of the great day of the resurrection: when not merely all *the dead*, but *all that are in the graves* shall hear His voice.’ What new mode of argument is this? Those ‘in the graves’ are surely ‘dead,’ and must be included in ‘all the dead.’ It is absurd to say, as Alford does in effect, ‘Not merely all the dead, but all the buried.’ The apparent absurdity can be accounted for only by the conception of Alford that the previous allusion to ‘the dead’ meant ‘the *spiritually* dead.’ He had inserted the idea of ‘spiritually’ before the word ‘dead;’ to be consistent, he should have inserted it also afterwards: ‘all that are *spiritually* in the graves.’ That would have saved any contradiction in terms, although neither addition could be justified. But the addition was made in the one place, and not in the other. Why? Because the mind of the Commentator was possessed with the idea of a bodily resurrection, and—strange to say—that belief was regarded as involving the necessity of the reincarnation of the elements which constituted the bodily frame at the moment of dissolution. That crude and monstrous notion is not contained in these words of Jesus, nor is it rightly deducible from them even when taken in connection with the

1 Habak. 5

29 Isa. 9

5 John 28

2 John 4

24 Mat. 36

,, 44



following words: 'and shall come forth.' True, at the word of Jesus Lazarus 'came forth' from the tomb; but the body of Lazarus had not within four days from death mouldered into dust. With respect to the resurrection of Jesus, Peter declared: 'Neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.' Paul made the same assertion: 'He whom God raised up saw no corruption.' Observe: although Jesus was 'raised up,' he 'saw no corruption:' therefore 'resurrection,' or being 'raised up,' does not, cannot mean the recovery of the body from decay, the reincorporation of its dissolved particles. The words 'shall come forth,' coupled with the mention of a resurrection, point to a renewal or continuation of existence, as was demonstrably the case with Lazarus and with Jesus. In the passage under consideration, there is nothing which conveys or involves the idea of a simultaneous resurrection, the uprising of the whole human family at once. All the dead, all those who have been laid in their tombs, will hear the voice of Jesus, and according to their deeds will be their destiny. 'And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done (or, practised) ill, unto the resurrection of judgment.' The 'coming forth' is not a 'coming forth' out of tombs, but a 'coming forth' to a resurrection of life or judgment. Tischendorf seems to have gone out of his way in the construction of the sentence, in order to make that clear: he alters the position of the words 'come forth,' his translation being: 'An hour is coming, in which all that are in the tombs will hear His voice, and they that did good will come forth unto a resurrection of life; and they that wrought bad, unto a resurrection of judgment.' The age-during life promised by Jesus (verse 24), is here declared to be contingent on character: those elected to it are, 'they that have done good.' Virtue and life must go together; God has joined them indissolubly, by the very constitution of our nature, and no power in earth or heaven can put them asunder. The boon of 'age-during life' will be imparted, not as by some sudden, subtle magic, a gift instantaneously and arbitrarily bestowed, making its possessor thenceforth safe for ever: no: it is bound up with obedience and conformity to the divine will, and the office of Jesus is to keep his flock from all harm and evil, suffering no man to pluck them out of the hands of himself and his Father. The influence of Jesus is directed to the perfecting of our nature. In heaven he will carry on the work begun by his Spirit here. Such was the glorious vision of the apostle Paul:

'When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,  
And gave gifts unto men.

And he gave some *to be* apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' 'Christ also loved the church (assembly—Young), and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church (assembly—Young) to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'



The expression 'they that have done good,' is opposed to 'they that have done ill.' Jesus recognises only two distinctions of character. We are not at liberty to imagine a neutral class of actions. Whatever is natural, beneficial, conducive to our bodily or spiritual welfare, must be classed as 'good,' as tending to the perfection and harmony of our being, and as agreeable to our heavenly Father, who desires only the happiness of His children. The virtue of self-denial, the law of self-sacrifice, will be developed and become active in each individual, but not equally at all times nor in all persons. Jesus preached no doctrine of asceticism for mankind in general, albeit he recognised the fact that under exceptional circumstances, and to compass the highest attainable objects, everything would have to be forsaken and endured. 'If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.' 'So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' Saint Paul declared: 'For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.' But to this his question applies: 'Are all apostles?' When Jesus urged the crowd he was addressing, as follows: 'Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal (age-during—Young) life,' and they asked, 'What must we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said unto them, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' This simple faith, confidence, trust in him, was the 'good' in them on which he could lay hold to raise them up to age-during life. And hereafter, in the resurrection, Jesus asserts the perpetuation of the same divine law of retribution which prevails on earth. He will there be to mankind a second Moses, to whom all must hearken and obey, as they value life and would escape death. Not one word of the old message will need to be altered: 'See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. . . . I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live.' Jesus represents himself as exercising in the world to come the authority of a judge. The words, 'And they that have done (or, practised) ill, unto the resurrection of judgement,' must be taken in connection with his declaration, 'and he gave him authority to execute judgement, because he is the Son of man (or, a son of man).' It has not been possible for English readers to get at the sense of the passage, in face of the rendering of the Authorised Version, 'And they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.' We know the frightful exaggeration which came to be attached to that word 'damnation': even the word 'condemnation' would be too strong, and the Revisers have done good service by giving the same word, 'judgment,' which stands in the contiguous verses, therein agreeing with Tischendorf, Alford, Young, Sharpe and Luther. Beza's Latin version, however, introduces into verses 24 and 29 the words 'condemnationem,' 'condemnationis,' although in verses 27 and 30 he renders the word 'judicium.' The French Version corresponds with the Latin. In the judgment exercised by Jesus there will be nothing arbitrary; he will weigh the evidence with strict impartiality: his decision will be right, and his sentence

19 Mat. 24

14 Luke 35

4 i. Cor. 9

12 i. Cor. 29

6 John 27

,, 28, 29

30 Deu. 15

,, 19

5 John 29

,, 27

determined by the facts. 'I can of myself do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is righteous.' Jesus will wield every judicial function under a sense of responsibility, not laying down a new law of his own, but seeking to carry out the will of the Father. 'Because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.'

Jesus was free to admit that in putting forward this claim to supremacy, his bare assertion, if uncorroborated, would rightly be regarded as incredible and untruthful. 'If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.' Tischendorf and Young render 'concerning myself' instead of 'of myself.' But another witness had come forward, the harbinger and eulogizer of Jesus, and his testimony was admitted as reliable. 'It is another that beareth witness of me ; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.' Tischendorf, following the oldest MS., reads 'ye know' instead of 'I know.' They had sent to the Baptist, and had received from him a truthful attestation. 'Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth.' Jesus, however, did not ground his claim on any human testimony, albeit he alluded to this evidence out of regard for their welfare. 'But the witness which I receive is not from man : howbeit I say these things, that ye may be saved.' As a matter of course, the expression, 'that ye may be saved,' must be defined by the context. Here the word 'saved' signifies their deliverance from prejudice and error, and conviction of the truth. The Baptist had stood forth as an intellectual and spiritual guide, and for a time they had shown themselves willing to exult in his Messianic teaching. 'He was the lamp that burneth and shineth ; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light.' But the mission of Jesus was attested by something in himself greater than the Baptist's preaching. 'But the witness which I have is greater than *that of* John.' His own course of life and action was sufficient evidence that his mission was divinely authorised. 'For the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.' The word 'accomplish' stands in the Authorised Version 'finish,' which agrees with Young. Tischendorf has, 'To complete them.' It seems to be implied that the works which Jesus did, were but introductory, preliminary, and prophetic, inaugurative of a system and course of working to be perfected subsequently.

Jesus asserted, moreover, 'And the Father which sent me, he hath borne witness of me.' We have read of the sign and voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus, and of the vision on the mount, followed by the solemn utterance out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son : hear ye him.' To such an attestation the words of Jesus may be taken to apply. But the revelation had not been granted to those he was addressing. 'Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form.' The Revisers have altered 'shape' to 'form,' agreeing with Tischendorf. Young renders the word 'appearance.' The allusion is obviously to some audible and visible manifestation of the Deity. Neither had the rejectors of Jesus any spiritual discernment within themselves ; there was no echo in them of the divine revelation ; in vain to them was the preaching of John and Jesus ; the heaven-sent messenger was not believed. 'And ye have not his word abiding in you : for whom he

sent, him ye believe not.' And yet they were diligent students of the Scriptures, deeming them a fountain of life. 'Ye search (or, <sup>5 John 39</sup> search) the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal (age-during—Young) life.' Those Scriptures also gave their witness to Jesus. 'And these are they which bear witness of me.' Alas! they clung to the dead book, but they held aloof from the living Messiah of whom it testified, and who came to them with the revelation and offer of age-during life. 'And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.' Young renders, 'ye are not willing to come;' Tischendorf 'ye desire not to come.' Jesus owed nothing to human teaching or prestige. 'I receive not glory from men.' Here and in verse 44 the Revisers replace the word 'honour' by 'glory,' as do Tischendorf, Alford and Young. Probably, however, 'honour' is on the whole the best English equivalent. Luther chose the same word (Ehre). There was no possibility of mutual esteem between Jesus and his adversaries. He had been compelled to recognize the fact that they were destitute of love to God. 'But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves.' Young renders, 'But I have known you:' he had bitter experience of their dispositions. The one object of Jesus was to stand forth as the representative of his Father, and in that character they refused to acknowledge him. 'I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.' They would appreciate one swayed by the same ambitions as themselves. 'If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.' It was a moral impossibility for them to place confidence in Jesus, esteeming as they did the good opinion of their fellows, betraying eagerness for social rank and human applause, but indifferent about the approval of Him whose judgment alone was important, final and inevitable. 'How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?' Tischendorf renders, 'while ye receive' instead of 'which receive,' and Young's 'receiving' carries the same sense. So long as they continued in that frame of mind and acted upon such principles, faith in Jesus they could not have.

The Revisers note that 'Some ancient authorities read *the only one*.' The Vatican MS. has, 'that cometh from me only' (omitting *God*). The Authorised Version has 'from God only,' which Alford condemns as ungrammatical.

This plain speaking of Jesus to their faces must not lead them to suppose that he would stand forth as their accuser in the presence of God. 'Think not that I will accuse you to the Father.' Moses, whose disciples they claimed to be, was their accuser. 'There is one that accuseth you, *even* Moses, on whom ye have set your hope.' Disbelief of Jesus was indicative of disbelief of Moses. 'For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me: for he wrote of me.' Young renders, 'For if ye were believing Moses ye would have been believing me, for he wrote concerning me.' We must not read this as if it stood, 'If ye believed Moses ye would identify and acknowledge me. The passages in Genesis and Deuteronomy, referred to in the margin, are too recondite to be applied in that way. We must give to the word 'believe' here its proper and usual scriptural sense, 'confide in' or 'trust:' If ye had confidence in Moses, ye would have confidence in me; for he wrote of me. The spirit which dictated the prediction



- 7 Acts 37 of Moses, 'A prophet shall God raise up unto you from your brethren, like unto me (or, as *he raised up* me),' would, if possessed by them, have led them to confide in that prophet's teaching. But they regarded the law of Moses as final and complete; they overlooked, ignored, showed an utter lack of perception or confidence with respect to his declaration that a Teacher such as Jesus claimed to be was destined to arise, at whose mouth they must receive a further divine revelation. This is what Moses wrote of him: 'And the Lord said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.' These Jewish doctors had failed to grasp this hope of a fuller revelation; they looked for a different kind of Messiah; they had not that faith in the statement of Moses which led Philip to say, 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' It was not that Philip was able to detect a correspondence between the prophecies and Jesus: as little or less than ourselves could he profess to arrive by that means at an identification of Jesus, who was then at the very beginning of his career; but Philip discerned and laid hold of the fact that Moses and the prophets foretold the advent of some great Teacher, and believing that, he believed in Jesus as answering their highest expectation and ideal. The prediction of Moses pointed specially to a Teacher and Lawgiver; these Jews were not disposed to receive anyone in that capacity: such a Messiah corresponded not with their desires and anticipations: in effect, they disbelieved Moses: how then could they have faith and hope in Jesus? 'But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?'
- 18 Deu. 17, 18
- 1 John 45
- 5 John 47

We turn now to the cleansing of a leper, related by Matthew, Mark and Luke. The way in which it is introduced by Luke appears to intimate that he had not been able to ascertain the place in which it occurred. 'And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold a man full of leprosy.' In Matthew's gospel it follows immediately after the words: 'And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him;' but there is no indication there of an intentional sequence, and with Luke's carefully compiled account before us, we may regard this verse as properly closing the 7th chapter of Matthew.

A man badly diseased with leprosy caught sight of Jesus, and made bold to approach him. Others would shun the leper, but the sufferer felt that he could hope to receive compassion from Jesus. 'And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought him.' He did not keep aloof, but sought the presence of Jesus: 'And there cometh to him a leper.' He assumed a posture of the utmost humility; Mark says, 'kneeling down;' Luke, 'fell on his face;' Matthew, 'worshipped him.' The American Revisers have noted on the word 'worship,' here and elsewhere: 'The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to man or to God.' He uttered a cry of entreaty, full of faith: there was no fear of Jesus being defiled by him, but he had hope of being cleansed by Jesus:

5 Luke 12

8 Mat. 1

5 Luke 12

1 Mark 40

8 Mat. 2



‘Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.’ Young renders 5 Luke 12  
 ‘Lord’ by the word ‘Sir;’ the term seems to be equivalent to the  
 German ‘Herr,’ equally adapted to ordinary intercourse and to the  
 expression of the highest possible reverence. Jesus was ‘moved with 1 Mark 41  
 compassion,’ at the sight of this pitiable creature; he scrupled not to  
 touch him. ‘And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, 5 Luke 13  
 saying, I will; be thou made clean.’ From that touch flowed health  
 and purity. ‘And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and 1 Mark 42  
 he was made clean.’ Was this marvellous cure wrought by the mere  
 volition, or by the actual contact? We cannot say that it was either  
 the will or the touch: probably the combination of both was requi-  
 site. The disease was subtle; equally so the means of cure. It  
 might be supposed in this instance that the touch was given as a sign  
 of sympathy, were it not that in other cases also Jesus had made a  
 point of laying his hands on sick persons. We cannot suppose he 4 Luke 40  
 did so without a reason; he would never, surely, have attitudinized  
 in that way. Especially he would have been careful not to touch a  
 leper needlessly. It was also for some good reason, doubtless, that  
 Jesus imposed silence upon the restored leper. No contamination  
 could possibly cling to the healer, but the religious scruples of many  
 Jews might naturally lead them to hold him ceremonially unclean,  
 according to the Mosaic law. That would raise a prejudice against  
 his touching others, and would interfere with his work of preaching  
 and healing. ‘And he strictly (or, sternly) charged him, and straight- 1 Mark 43, 44  
 way sent him out, and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any  
 man.’ The Authorised Version stands, ‘sent him away,’ but ‘sent  
 him out’ in the Revised Version agrees with Young’s, ‘And having  
 sternly charged him, immediately he put him forth.’ This makes it  
 evident that the miracle was performed indoors, and explains what  
 would otherwise be a difficulty: for of what use would it have been  
 to enforce silence if the cure had been wrought openly in the sight  
 of a multitude? Jesus was anxious, for the sake of the man himself  
 and of others, that there should be as little apparent infraction or  
 disregard of the Law as possible. Therefore he commanded him to  
 visit the priest, and to testify the fact of his cleansing by presenting  
 the appointed offering. ‘But go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, 44  
 and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a  
 testimony unto them.’ Strange to say, the man disobeyed the express  
 command of his Benefactor to maintain silence. ‘But he went out, 45  
 and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter (Gr.  
 word).’ The evil which resulted from this was soon apparent: ‘In-  
 so-much that Jesus (Gr. he) could no more openly enter into a (or,  
 the) city, but was without in desert places.’ Although the Revisers  
 have retained the name ‘Jesus’ in this verse, they have noted that in  
 the original it stands ‘he.’ Tischendorf, Young and Luther render  
 ‘he.’ The alteration was doubtless made at first to bring out the evident  
 sense, and the Revisers have shown their regard for the text by refer-  
 ring to the original; but it would be better to leave out any gloss of  
 this kind, and throw upon every reader of the narrative the responsi-  
 bility of exercising common sense and judgment in its interpretation.

In corroboration of the view which has been taken, it will be well  
 to refer more particularly to the question of leprous defilement. The  
 law was as follows: ‘The leper in whom the plague is, his clothes 13 Lev. 45, 46

shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days, wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be.' As far as circumstances permitted, that command was still observed, as is shown by the fact that on one occasion, 'as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' It is obvious that lepers were still shunned, were restricted to companionship with such as were similarly afflicted, and could not properly venture to approach other people. The law decreed further: 'If any one touch any unclean thing . . . or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever his uncleanness be, wherewith he is unclean, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty.' How much less, therefore, would any Jew be at liberty voluntarily to touch a leper! But this leper did not 'stand afar off'; he intruded into the presence of Jesus; he knelt, indeed, before him, and would not have dared to touch him. Yet Jesus, moved by the irresistible impulse of his compassion, boldly and openly laid his hand upon the man, thereby not defiling himself, but cleansing the leper. It was a magnanimous action, and one likely to evoke a storm of hostile and prejudicial criticism. It was desirable to give as little occasion as possible for such an outburst. To have allowed the man to report the cure, but not the fact of having been touched by Jesus, would not have been consistent with truth or dignity. But it was quite a different thing to enjoin a discreet and entire silence. Had that been maintained, as Jesus desired, his course of beneficial ministration would have gone on unopposed and unimpeded. As it was, the thing became blazed abroad, the great Teacher himself was pointed at as 'unclean' and 'guilty'; to have touched him now would have disseminated 'uncleanness'; therefore he found himself constrained to quit the city; he could only enter it, even for necessary purposes, by stealth; he himself became for the time an outcast, keeping 'without in desert places.'

How does Luke's account agree with this interpretation? It runs as follows: 'But so much the more went abroad the report concerning him; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities.' To a hasty reader this might seem to bear out the idea which apparently lies on the surface of the narrative: that is, that the great publicity of the cure of the leper attracted such enormous crowds as to interfere with the business of the city, thus compelling Jesus to preach and heal elsewhere, 'without in desert places.' If Luke, from the facts before him, had arrived at that conclusion, we might even go so far as to express an opinion that for once, at least, he had erred either in judgment or through defective information. That may seem a very bold thing to say; but it is not said presumptuously or without a cause: for it is now high time that men should learn to shake off the incubus of that longbear doctrine—Inspiration—and learn to treat the writings of the evangelists and apostles with the respect, no more, no less, due to men who were inspired with the love of Truth, and who did their best to ascertain and transmit it. But, in fact, Luke's narrative bears out the conclusions already arrived at. He tells of the publica-

tion of the miracle, of the multitudes who came anxious to hear Jesus or to be cured by him, only to add : ' But he withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed.' How strange that Jesus, at such a time, should fail to face the crowds who had been attracted by his own words and works ! His touching of the leper explains it all. Mark puts the absence of Jesus in the same way as Luke. After noting the withdrawal of Jesus to ' desert places,' he tells how the people were flocking to him from all points. ' And they came to him from every quarter,' Young and Tischendorf render, ' they were coming to him.' And he in solitude !

He suffered some days to elapse before he again entered either that or another city ; probably in order to remove all suspicion of his being ceremonially unclean. And then he returned to his home in Capernaum, it would seem, privately, and did not show himself until the report was spread that he was again there. ' And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house (or, at home).' Matthew, without entering into particulars, intimates that he had withdrawn to the other side of the lake, and then returned quietly by boat. ' And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city.'

As soon as his arrival was known, an enormous crowd surrounded his dwelling. The room in which he was discoursing overflowed, and even about the door there were eager listeners. ' And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door : and he spake the word unto them.' Luke tells us that among the hearers were some who ranked high in the Jewish Church, and who came from all parts, not only in the immediate neighbourhood but in Judea, and from as far as Jerusalem. ' And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching ; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem.' Great must have been the charm of his oratory, which could thus attract all classes, and from such remote places. But he was not only teaching, but also healing. ' And the power of the Lord was with him to heal (Gr. that he should heal).' Luke could only mean, by that observation, that Jesus healed through the power given to him by God. Aiford admits this : ' The meaning is, the power of God (working in the Lord Jesus) was in the direction of his healing : *i.e.* wrought so that he exercised the powers of healing.' A man utterly impotent through palsy was carried to the place, borne by four persons on his bed. ' And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four'—' lying on a bed.' They tried to obtain an entrance, in order to lay him before Jesus, but there was no possibility of passing through the crowd. ' And they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him' . . . but ' they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd.' In their anxiety for the restoration of the invalid, not deterred by any amount of trouble, and not shrinking from any expense entailed by their proceedings, they hit upon an expedient for gaining access to Jesus. They went up to the roof of the house, uncovered it, removing the tiles, broke it away as far as necessary, and then let down the man on his couch right in front of Jesus. ' They went up to the housetop' . . . ' uncovered the roof where he was, and when they had broken



5 Luke 19 it up' . . . 'let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus.' It was a striking exhibition of confidence in Jesus, on the part both of the bearers and of the invalid. Jesus recognised this, and, knowing how welcome to them would be any word of comfort from his lips, he hastened to speak it. 'And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son (Gr. child), be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven.' They had come for the healing of the body; the good physician began by infusing peace into the mind. It was not what they expected; and the words gave umbrage to many of those present. The scribes and Pharisees were shocked at the saying; it raised in their minds grave doubts with respect to the character of Jesus. Was he not speaking presumptuously, even blasphemously? 'But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth.' Luke states that the Pharisees joined in this reproach, and he does not specify the reasoning as being mental, as Mark does, 'in their hearts,' and Matthew 'within themselves.' Their accusation was based upon the idea that forgiveness was a divine prerogative, not within the power of man to impart: 'Who can forgive sins but one, *even* God?' 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

We shall do well to pause here, and consider what is meant by the forgiveness of sins. Without a clear idea on that point, we shall be as confused and bewildered as were these gainsaying scribes.

4 Rom. 15 Sin is the breach of a law. 'Where there is no law, neither is there transgression.' And again: 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.' In the Revised Version, which agrees with Young's translation, this is rendered somewhat differently: 'Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness.' Tischendorf renders: 'Every one that does sin does also transgression: and sin is transgression.' Sin, therefore, is the infringement of a law, whether a law divine or human, natural or revealed. Further: to every transgression of a law there is a penalty attached. 'Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.' What then, can the forgiveness of sin be, except the remission of the penalty appertaining to sin? We can attach no other meaning to forgiveness when speaking with reference to human laws. To say that a criminal is forgiven, is equivalent to saying that the punishment attaching to his crime is remitted. When, therefore, Jesus told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven, he, in fact, announced the removal of the punishment which was connected with and due to them. It was no random speech, dissociated from the hope of cure which had impelled the sufferer to seek the aid of Jesus. It must have had a significance bearing upon the bodily as well as spiritual state of the sufferer. Alford quotes Neander's opinion to that effect: 'Either it was the natural consequence of sinful indulgence, or by its means the feeling of sinfulness and guilt was more strongly aroused in him, and he recognized the misery of his disease as the punishment of his sins.' This view is quite in harmony with the reply made by Jesus to his accusers. They seem not to have expressed their criticism openly in plain words, but Jesus perceived the drift of their reasonings, and challenged them to produce any justification of them. 'And straight-

5 Luke 19

9 Mat. 2

2 Mark 6, 7

5 Luke 21

9 Mat. 3

2 Mark 7

5 Luke 21

4 Rom. 15

2 i. John 4

2 Heb. 2

2 Mark 8



way Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, 'Why reason ye these things in your hearts?' What distinction could they draw between his saying to the man that his sins were forgiven, or his speaking a word which would bring about his cure? Was the one any easier than the other? 'Whether is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?' But in order to convince them that the Son of man on earth, as well as God in heaven, was authorised to forgive sins, he would speak the word of healing. 'But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power (or, authority) on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.' The deliverance from his infirmity was one and the same with the forgiveness of his sins. Forgiveness is no mere change in the mind of the sinner, nor is it merely a change in the attitude of God towards him, but it must include the actual remission of the penal consequences of the sin, the withholding, or the removal, of the punishment.

The expression 'the Son of man' is peculiar. Jesus seems here to apply it to himself as the representative of humanity. Trench regarded it as 'the standing title whereby the Lord was well pleased to designate Himself, bringing out by it that he was at once one with humanity, and the crown of humanity. He does not so use it that the title is everywhere to be pressed, but at times simply as equivalent to Messiah.'

It is undeniable that Jesus, in his reply, distinguishes between human forgiveness and divine forgiveness. The theologians sitting before him went too far: they assumed that God alone could forgive sins. Were that true, we could never forgive those who sin against us, much less pray 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.' The words of Jesus, however, do not extend so far as to assert that men in general, or he himself in particular, could forgive all sins. Under what limitations, then, must this power of human forgiveness be exercised? It is obviously restricted to those cases in which we are able to spare the transgressor the punishment which attaches, either naturally or judicially, to his sin. It was true that the scribes could not have forgiven the sins of the paralytic; Jesus was able to do so, because God had given him the power to heal, and the wisdom to discern the connection between the sin and the suffering. But in many cases we all have and can exercise the prerogative of forgiveness; and this in various ways. To forgive offences committed against ourselves means, not the mere expression of forgiveness, not the mere casting away from ourselves a revengeful spirit, but also the deliverance by us of the transgressor from the penal consequences of his transgression. You cannot forgive and, at the same time, prosecute a criminal. That is a contradiction in terms. You may, perchance, be bound to prosecute; you may have to do so against your will: in such a case the power of forgiveness is taken from you, either by process of law which compels you to bear unwilling testimony, or by your sense of duty to society; you do not forgive, simply because you cannot. In the same way, to forgive a debt means the relinquishment of all claim to its payment. You cannot profess to have forgiven it, while you continue either to receive the interest or hope for the recovery of the principal. On the other

hand, your debtor may become bankrupt ; he claims the protection of the law, offering to divide equitably such assets as he has ; the law frees his future income from all past claims ; you cannot enforce your right to the balance due to you : you are compelled to forgive the debt, much as you may begrudge the money, and long to get it back. Human forgiveness therefore presents itself under various aspects :

1. You may have the power, and exercise it, of forgiving a wrong or debt.

2. You may have the power of forgiving a wrong or a debt, and you may refuse to forgive.

3. You may wish to forgive a wrong or a debt, and may find yourself unable to forgive.

4. You may desire not to forgive a wrong or a debt, and you may be compelled to forgive.

To these cases may be added another, which is, in fact, the case in point. A sin may be forgiven, in the full and proper sense of the remission of the penalty, by the voluntary intervention and power of a person not otherwise concerned in the sin and its effects. Suppose a man to have made an attempt on his own life : the natural penalty—and beyond that who will dare to look or judge?—may be either death, disablement, or disfigurement. A skilled physician steps in ; he stops the flow of blood, and so wards off the death ; or he restores the shattered limb, making the man whole and sound. Thereby he has remitted the penalty, in other words, forgiven the sin. That is precisely what Jesus did to the paralytic, and what he argued it was within the power and authority of humanity to effect.

These reflections impress us with the idea, too often lost sight of, that the forgiveness of sins is and must be a reality. It is no mere mental phenomenon : it is either an actuality in the life and experience of the sinner, or it is nothing but a sham, a delusion, and a snare. No prisoner is forgiven, unless his dungeon door flies open. No sin is forgiven, unless every remaining penalty attaching to that sin is removed. The essence of forgiveness is not in the word, or the thought, or the intention, but in the act. To speak of forgiving, apart from a real, tangible effect, is as absurd as it would be to speak of giving without a gift. Whenever a man, be he who he may, pronounces the forgiveness of a sin or sins, it behoves us to ask, What effect follows upon his words ? If none, they are but words ; and such words were best left unspoken.

But what of the multitude of sins unrecognized and, as far as we can know, unpunished, or recognized but not punishable by human laws ? Where man has no power to punish, he has no power to forgive. There is a broad and deep sea of human transgression, which only infinite wisdom can fathom, unerring justice deal with, and boundless mercy pardon. That which we know not, or which lies beyond us, we must leave to God. His judgments are not restricted to this earthly life ; and Jesus himself claimed on behalf of Man no power of forgiveness beyond the present world : 'The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.'

The word of forgiveness which Jesus spake to the paralytic, was borne out and justified by the word of healing. All his vigour and activity came back upon the instant : the bed-ridden, impotent

invalid needed no longer trouble the four friends who had carried him up to the housetop and then lowered him down into the presence of Jesus : he shouldered his own couch, and walked back to his home, astounded and rejoicing. ‘And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house.’ And, as befitted one having the consciousness of sins forgiven, as well as of health restored, he praised God for the mercy and blessing wrought on his behalf by Jesus : ‘glorifying God.’ 5 Luke 25

The effect produced by the miracle on the minds of the beholders is described by the three evangelists in somewhat differing terms. Matthew brings out the fact that the act was performed in such a way as to make men think more of God’s goodness than of the worker of the wonder. ‘But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God.’ And, far from inferring that Jesus was possessed of divine attributes, Matthew reports that they added : ‘which had given such power (or, authority) unto men.’ Mark’s account runs thus : ‘Insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.’ Luke’s account is as follows : ‘And amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God ; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.’ There is a substantial agreement in the narratives, and probably the various forms in which the astonishment of the crowd was expressed is the origin of the verbal differences. 9 Mat. 8  
5 Luke 26

Subsequently to the events last recorded, Jesus left the house and again went out to teach by the sea-shore, the multitude following him thither. ‘And after these things he went forth . . . again by the sea-side ; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.’ On the way thither, he passed the place at which the Roman taxes were received, and seated there he saw one of the tax collectors or renters. In Matthew he is named Matthew, in Luke Levi, and in Mark Levi the *son* of Alphaeus. Jesus desired this man to follow him, which he immediately did, regardless, in his anxiety to obey the call, of all he left behind. ‘And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll : and he saith unto him, Follow me.’ ‘And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him.’ The words ‘forsook all’ seem to imply that the call was understood to be a permanent one, involving the relinquishment of all other business and connexions. 27  
2 Mark 13

Far from regretting the call, this newly chosen disciple showed his respect for Jesus by preparing a grand feast in his honour. ‘And Levi made him a great feast in his house.’ Jesus and his disciples were there, and it seems that every one who would was made welcome : it was ‘open house’ to all that day, and the crowd which had gathered to hear Jesus, including many of the tax-gatherers and persons even of tarnished character, followed him and sat down at the same table. ‘And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples : for there were many, and they followed him.’ Tischendorf, following the Sinaitic codex, alters the connexion here : ‘for there were many ; and there followed him also scribes of the Pharisees.’ The Revisers render also ‘scribes of the Pharisees,’ noting that ‘some ancient authorities read “and the Pharisees,”’ as does the Authorized Version. These scribes of the Pharisaic sect did 9 Mat. 9  
5 Luke 28  
29  
2 Mark 15



not sit down with the others, but stood watching, and began to criticise. ‘And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, He eateth (or, How is it that he eateth) and drinketh with publicans and sinners.’ Matthew reports the question thus: ‘Why eateth your Master (or, Teacher) with the publicans and sinners?’ Luke’s narrative runs: ‘And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners?’ These slight variations are explicable in the same way as those noted already in the comments of the crowd on the healing of the paralytic. Alford remarks: ‘The three accounts are in matter nearly identical, and in diction so minutely and unaccountably varied, as to declare here, as elsewhere, their independence of one another, except in having had some common source from which they have more or less deflected.’

The strictures of the Pharisees soon reached the ears of Jesus, and he met them with a very striking and dignified reply. The proper place for a physician was in the midst of persons known to be diseased: the healthy might dispense with his presence. ‘But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole (Gr. strong) have no need of a physician, but they that are weak.’ As these cavillers deemed themselves too good for the company, let them quit it: but, as a religious exercise, ponder the meaning of a certain Scripture. ‘But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth, I desire merey, and not sacrifice.’ The Teacher was doing the mission for which God had sent him, by mingling with such moral outcasts rather than with those of unstained life. ‘For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.’ Luke adds, to ‘repentance,’ which words also stand in the Authorised Version of Matthew and Mark, but are omitted by the Revisers, not being found in the oldest MSS.

The evangelists next record another criticism, and the way in which it was disposed of by Jesus. It was on the occasion of a fast, which was kept both by the disciples of the Baptist and of the Pharisees, but to which the disciples of Jesus paid no regard. These strict ritualists came to enquire why Jesus allowed that laxity of practice. ‘And John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?’ Matthew puts it thus: ‘Then come to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft (*oft* is omitted by Tischendorf), but thy disciples fast not?’ Luke is fuller: ‘And they said unto him, The disciples of John fast often, and make supplications; likewise also the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink.’ They not only fasted less, but prayed less, and, in lieu of these devout exercises, were showing signs of rejoicing. But Jesus justified his disciples. It was precisely because their hearts were filled with gladness that they did not fast, could not even think of fasting. In their frame of mind it was as little to be expected, and would have been as much out of place, as that the bridegroom’s friends, going to fetch the bride, should fast at the wedding-feast. ‘And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?’ As his friends, they must share his joy. ‘As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.’ But there would



come dark days, when they would have to mourn the loss of him in whose joy they were now rejoicing. Then the wedding-song would be exchanged for the funeral dirge, and fasting take the place of feasting. 'But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.' The significance of the illustration appears to be this: fasting is proper only when it is natural; it is not to be enforced as a religious duty irrespective of times, and moods, and circumstances. Men are as prone to demonstrations of sorrow as of joy: to call for the former out of season is absurd; to prescribe fasting, therefore, at set times, to aim at its observance at regular intervals, is alike contrary to nature and opposed to the teaching of Jesus. Desiring to be guided by his spirit, we may question the wisdom of our ancestors in their appointment of the forty days of Lent. The members of the Church of England have never been, and never will be, one whit bettered by them. You could devise no surer way of making men and women unconscious hypocrites, than by throwing upon them for forty days together the burden of a morbid self-introspection, which neither Christ nor his apostles enjoined, and by teaching them to bow down their souls as a bulrush in an enforced contemplation of that mysterious and prolonged fasting in the desert which has been handed down for us to ponder over, as best we may, but not for the stultification of our mental and moral faculties by a puerile attempt at imitation. None can say how much of evil has been produced by that foolish attempt to transform, for the time being, Christians, of both sexes and varying ages, into contemplative recluses, anchorites of the desert: 'which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body, but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.' May not this be one of the causes why our clergy have lost touch of the sound, commonsense of the people they are seeking to teach and guide? The young curate keeps his Lenten vigils; he gains an influence over certain minds, not the strongest or healthiest, in his congregation; he rises up in the pulpit, and sets his face like a flint, while he discourses to his grey-haired seniors on their neglect of what he deems their souls' welfare, laments their indifference to 'ordinances,' and would persuade them, if he could, like John's disciples, to 'fast often and make supplications.' The effects are sad: in himself, self-righteousness, false humility, a spirit of censoriousness; in the devotees who follow his leading, some declension from the natural charm of manliness or womanhood; and the loss of nearly all the real influence for good which a wiser mind and a more Christ-like spirit would have enabled him to gain.

In further justification of his disciples, Jesus illustrated the matter by another simile. To cloth old and threadbare, no one would think of attaching cloth new and rough; for the result of doing so would be to tear still further the patened garment. 'And no man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up, taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made.' Luke puts this in a different form: 'And he spake also a parable unto them; No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment: else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old.' This seems to include another

2 Mark 20

2 Col. 22

9 Mat. 16

5 Luke 36

idea : that it would be absurd to tear a new garment for the sake of patching an old one ; that would be to spoil the former without bettering the appearance of the latter. Just as foolish would be the attempt to blend the joy and freedom of the new 'gospel' with the ancient ceremonial observances : 'the new will not agree with the old.'

This parable was followed up by another, showing in a different form the incompatibility between old and new. It was an unheard of thing to put new wine into old bottles : in explanation of which Alford says : 'It was and is the custom in the East to carry their wine on a journey in leather bottles, generally of goats' skin, sometimes of asses' or camels' skin.' The effect of putting the strong, new liquor into skins weakened by age, would be the bursting of the skins, thereby losing both wine and bottles. But by putting the fresh vintage into fresh skins, all danger of loss was avoided. 'Neither do *men* put new wine into old wine-skins : else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish : but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins and both are preserved.'

9 Mat. 17

Luke adds a third parable, which was very apposite to the point under discussion. 'And no man having drunk old *wine* desireth new : for he saith, The old is good.' The Revisers have put 'good' for 'better,' following the two oldest MSS. Change from a thing with which we are familiar to something unaccustomed, may seem undesirable. It is natural to cling to old habits and tastes, and time is required to reconcile men to a new order of things. In the Authorised Version the word 'straightway' before 'desireth' brings out this point more clearly ; but the Revisers, in their laudable desire for accuracy, have omitted 'straightway,' in accordance with the two oldest MSS.

5 Luke 34

It is interesting to trace the agreements and divergencies in the respective accounts of the evangelists. Mark says, 'the Pharisees were fasting ;' Matthew and Luke omit that, but all three relate the question about fasting, with slight verbal differences. The 'often' fasting of the Pharisees is noted by Matthew and Luke, but not by Mark. Matthew and Mark say, 'thy disciples fast not,' but Luke has it, 'thine eat and drink.' Mark says, 'Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn ?' Luke, 'Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast ?' Mark adds : 'As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.' Mark has, 'Seweth a piece of undressed cloth,' Matthew, 'putteth a piece of undressed cloth,' and Luke conveys, as we have noted, an idea so different that his parable may have been delivered at some other time. Matthew adds to the simile of the wine and wine-skins, 'and both are preserved,' which the Revisers, following the oldest MSS., have omitted from Luke ; and Luke concludes with a parable about old and new wine, which is omitted by the other evangelists. The question of the manner in which the narrative was built up has been very fully and ably dealt with in a small work, 'The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels,'\* which assumes that they were based upon a common tradition, to which Mark adhered more closely than the other evangelists. The authors argue : 'If Mark did not combine Matthew and Luke, it follows that (since the resemblance is far too close to be accounted for as accidental) Matthew and Luke must

\* By Edwin A. Abbott, D.D., and W. G. Rushbrook, M.L. (Macmillan & Co.).

have borrowed from Mark, or—if that hypothesis be dismissed, as it must be—from some common tradition which is embodied in Mark. This will explain all the phenomena of the Triple Tradition. The two later writers, *borrowing independently from the original tradition (which is contained in Mark)* would agree with one another *only so far as they borrowed*, or in other words *would contain nothing in common which was not also in Mark*. For the rest, Matthew would borrow this, and Luke that; so that when all that had been borrowed from Mark (we mean, the original Tradition contained in Mark), was deducted from Mark, very little would be left that could be set down as peculiar to Mark. Hence (in the following Harmony), when the reader looks down the left-hand column which represents the “portions peculiar to Mark,” he need not be surprised at sometimes finding little but a group of words such as “and,” “straightway,” “that,” and other mannerisms of the Evangelist. This paucity of “peculiar matter” is a tribute to the faithfulness with which Mark followed, without enlarging, the Original Tradition.’

The simile of the new and old cloth is an instance of this: the only portion thereof in Mark not found in Matthew or Luke is the one word ‘seweth,’ and for that Matthew has ‘putteth.’

The circumstance next recorded is stated by the three evangelists to have happened on a sabbath, but there is a peculiarity about Luke’s diction which needs consideration. The Authorized Version is as follows: ‘And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first.’ The Revisers have noted that ‘many ancient authorities insert *second-first*.’ Alford observes: ‘The word thus rendered presents much difficulty. None of the interpretations have any certainty, as the word is found nowhere else, and can only be judged of by analogy.’ Young’s rendering is: ‘And it came to pass on the second-first sabbath.’ It would seem that one particular sabbath of the year is referred to, which idea is confirmed by Tischendorf’s free rendering: ‘And it came to pass on the first sabbath after the second day of the passover.’

On that sabbath day Jesus was passing through cornfields. His disciples were hungry, and began plucking off the wheat-ears, and as one person followed another their pathway showed itself. ‘At that 12 Mat. 1 season Jesus went on the Sabbath-day through the cornfields. And his disciples were an hungred, and . . . began as they went, to 2 Mark 23 pluck the ears of corn (Gr. began to make *their* way plucking).’ It required, of course, an effort to extract the grain: ‘and did eat, 6 Luke 1 rubbing them in their hands.’ This seemed to the Pharisees a public scandal, as being an infringement on the sacredness of the day. They called the attention of Jesus to it, and asked what explanation could be given in its justification. ‘But the Pharisees, when they 12 Mat. 2 saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath.’ Or, ‘Behold, why do they on the 2 Mark 24 sabbath day that which is not lawful?’ Luke puts the question as addressed to the disciples: ‘Why do ye that which it is not lawful 6 Luke 2 to do on the sabbath day?’ It would have been easy, one might almost venture to say judicious, on the part of Jesus, to have yielded somewhat to the strict notions of these Sabbatarians. If they erred through excess of zeal, was not their error on the safe side? Surely the teacher had sufficient hold upon his disciples to have controlled



them with a word. Yet that word he would not speak! The Pharisees stood forth as defenders of God's law: Jesus met them as the champion of man's necessities. Admit the breach of a command: had these critics never read of something very similar? Under the pressure of hunger, David had asked and a priest had given to him and his troops, the holy bread, which it was not lawful for any but priests to eat. 'And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he entered into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and did eat the shew bread, which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him.' There is a discrepancy between this quotation and the original narrative, in which the high priest is said to have been Ahimelech, not Abiathar. That, however, is a matter of small concern to us, in the absence of foregone conclusions as to the inspiration and consequent infallibility of the New Testament writers. Further: Did not the law itself, in which the Sabbath was decreed, provide for the infraction of the sabbath by the priests, whose labours on that day were more onerous than on any other? 'Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?' The necessity of the action makes it innocent. The next verse needs consideration. In the Authorized Version it stands as follows: 'But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.' The italics show the word 'one' to be an insertion of the translators. Young's rendering is: 'But I say to you that a greater than the temple is here. This leaves the word 'greater' indefinite, as to whether it applies to a person or a thing. Alford notes: 'The Greek has merely *greater*, and the best MSS. have it in the neuter gender, which sustains the parallel better: *a greater thing than the temple* is here.' But then Alford immediately explains away his own rendering, applying the words to 'Him who is greater than the temple, the true Temple of God on earth, the Son of Man.' The Revisers seem to have gone yet more astray. They render the verse: 'But I say unto you, that one greater (Gr. a greater thing) than the temple is here.' They are careful to tell us that the allusion is, in the original, to a thing, yet they apply it to a person, and do not even put the word "one" in italics, though it rightly stood so in the Authorized Version. The Tauchnitz edition of the New Testament notes that the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read: 'that something greater than the temple is here,' and Tischendorf renders the passage thus: 'But I say unto you, that what is greater than the temple is here.' There are the best reasons for taking the words in that way, and the true sense attaching to them must be consistent therewith. Let us discard theological preconceptions, and ask what such words, spoken under such circumstances, by any other Teacher, would be held to signify. Jesus had just alluded to the fact that necessary sabbath labour in a temple was innocent. They were standing in the open fields, discussing the question, the ripening corn around them and the blue dome of heaven bending over all. Was not that a temple of God, greater far than any built by human hands? What might be done for man's welfare in the lesser, might surely be done in the greater. If the temple at Jerusalem sanctified necessary acts appertaining to its sabbath services, even so God's free

21 1. Sam. 6

2 Mark 25, 26

12 Mat. 5

6



and open temple sanctified, in the eyes of Jesus, this rubbing together of the wheat ears which God's providence had provided for man's need : 'That which is greater than the temple is here.' The Pharisees, in their zeal for the ceremonial law, overlooked the teaching of the prophets. On a former occasion Jesus had bidden them, 'Go ye <sup>9 Mat. 13</sup> and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' They had not learnt this, and Jesus now repeats the quotation, telling them that if they had known its meaning they would not have charged his disciples with an offence which they had not committed. 'But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not <sup>12 Mat. 7</sup> sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.' Then he stated, in a sentence full of the highest wisdom, his own views with respect to sabbath observances. 'And he said unto them, The sab- <sup>2 Mark 27</sup> bath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' From which it follows man is not a slave to the day, but ruler over it, to use it for his needs : 'So that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.' <sup>28</sup> That deep, grand, irrefutable truth touches not upon any question as to the non-observance of the day, for the disciples had not broken the sabbath, and the assertion of man's right to rule it implies necessarily the observance of it. The expression 'Son of man' cannot be restricted to Jesus ; even when Alford applies it to him, it is as the representative of humanity : 'The Son of man, who has taken upon Him full and complete Manhood, the great representative and Head of humanity, has this institution under his own power.' But Jesus was not, in defending his disciples, exercising any power of abrogation or amendment ; he altered nothing, he claimed no right either for himself or others which did not previously exist. His argument was based upon the Law, the prophets and human needs.

The question as to the sanctity of the sabbath having been thus raised, it was not allowed to rest. The Pharisees had not been convinced by the arguments of Jesus, but kept an attitude of suspicious watchfulness over him, his acts and teachings. An opportunity for criticism soon presented itself. Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on the sabbath. The narratives of Matthew and Mark would seem to lead to the inference that it was on the same sabbath, and that Jesus went direct from the cornfields to the synagogue ; but Luke says that it was on another sabbath. A deformed man was among the congregation, and the scribes and Pharisees were there, anxious to see whether Jesus would heal him, and determined, if he did, to bring against him an accusation of sabbath-breaking. 'And it came <sup>6 Luke 6, 7</sup> to pass on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught : and there was a man there, and his right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath ; that they might find how to accuse him.' By some means Jesus was conscious of their intention : 'But he knew <sup>8</sup> their thoughts.' This expression of the evangelist must not be pressed as necessarily indicating on the part of Jesus any supernatural knowledge. The objects of a group of hostile critics, exchanging glances and whispered comments, might be evident enough to any sagacious observer knowing the views they had before expressed on the question of sabbath desecration. Jesus was not thereby deterred from carrying out his work in his own way. He

addressed the man, who, probably, had come thither in hope of cure. He bade him rise up, and stand in the centre of that gazing crowd. And the man obeyed the command. 'And he said to the man that had his hand withered, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.' Then he proposed a question to those present. Assume that on a sabbath day the alternative presented itself of doing either benefit or harm, of either saving or destroying a life: which alternative ought to be chosen as lawful? 'And Jesus said unto them, I ask you, Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm? to save a life or to destroy it?' The voice of nature and of right reason could have answered forthwith, and but in one way; but in their state of mind they could give no reply. 'But they held their peace.' Thereupon Jesus put to them another question. Was any one present who, if a sheep of his should fall into a pit on a sabbath, would refrain from taking hold of it, and pulling it out? 'And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?' There is an emphasis on 'one' and 'this' sheep: if the man had a large number he might, perhaps, let the strayed one take its chance for a day. But if he felt much interest in the animal, he would succour it at once. And it could only be lack of interest in this man, which would counsel the delaying of his cure. The act of healing would be so much the more legitimate in proportion to the value of a man above a sheep. 'How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!' Then, again, in one pregnant sentence, Jesus expressed his own view of the matter. 'Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day.'

Still his words made no impression on the cavillers surrounding him. Not a word or gesture of assent from them! With a sacred and sorrowful indignation flaming in his face, he gazed round the group, finding no signs of conviction or relenting. It was useless to speak to them further. His word went forth to the man who so eagerly had waited for it. 'And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand.' What a word was that! The power of movement came into that shrivelled hand; the muscles were found capable of action, and the disused fingers reasserted their cunning. 'And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored.' It is added in Matthew: 'whole, as the other.' Although the last three words are not in the Sinaitic MS., the Revisers have retained them. In the Authorised Version the words 'whole as the other' appear also in Mark and Luke, but are now omitted by the Revisers, not being found in the oldest MSS. It would seem that in the early days of Christianity, when manuscripts of the Scriptures began to multiply, various copies were compared, and certain additions made from one manuscript to another. Tischendorf's edition goes back to the oldest and most reliable MSS., and the Revisers have followed generally the same plan.

It was no light thing for Jesus to have undertaken this discussion in public, placing himself in opposition to the powerful sect of the Pharisees. All the evil passions of their minds were excited against him. So bitter was their resentment that they conferred together as to what they could do to the man who had denounced their error of

judgment, and thereby shaken their authority over the people. 'But they were filled with madness (or, foolishness); and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.' The result of their deliberations was the calling of a council, in which the Herodians were included. These 'were more of a political than a religious sect, the dependants and supporters of the dynasty of Herod' (Alford); their assistance would forward the object aimed at, which was nothing less than the death of Jesus. 'And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.' It was indeed, to adopt Luke's expression, a scheme of 'madness,' dictated by a spirit of bigotry and intense theological rancour. It placed Jesus in great danger and difficulty, and interfered sadly with his plans and course of teaching. He decided to leave the neighbourhood, not ceasing his labours of love, but performing them as quietly and unostentatiously as possible. Many followed him, and he healed all who came to him, but imposed silence on them, evidently desiring to be as little talked about as possible. 'And Jesus perceiving it withdrew from thence: and many followed him, and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known.' The expression in the Authorised Version, 'great multitudes,' is toned down by the Revisers to 'many,' in accordance with the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.

In this self-abnegation Matthew discerned the fulfilment of 42 Isa. 1—4. 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by (or, through) Isaiah the prophet, saying,

Behold, my servant whom I have chosen;  
 My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased;  
 I will put my Spirit upon him,  
 And he shall declare judgement to the Gentiles.  
 He shall not strive, nor cry aloud;  
 Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.  
 A bruised reed shall he not break,  
 And smoking flax shall he not quench,  
 Till he send forth judgement unto victory.  
 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.'

In the original, the word 'truth' appears instead of 'victory,' and the last line is not found, but it may be considered equivalent to Isaiah's words, 'And the isles shall wait for his law.' Alford explains these slight discrepancies by saying: 'The prophecy is partly from the LXX., partly an original translation.' Something also may be allowed for faultiness of memory on the part of the writer, as it might not be possible at all times to refer to a manuscript roll of the prophets.

Although Jesus was carrying on his work with so much circumspection and quietness, his whole soul was in it, and so overcharged, about this time, with the responsibilities of his mission, that he sought the solitude of a mountain for the purpose of prayer. 'And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray.' There, in the midnight silence, he communed with himself and with God, and the hours of the night wore away before his prayer was ended. 'And he continued all night in prayer to God.' In the morning, as having gained strength and decision of purpose, he called his disciples, selecting some from among them. 'And when

6 Luke 11

3 Mark 6

12 Mat. 15, 16

12 Mat. 17-21

6 Luke 12

, 12

, 13

3 Mat. 13 it was day, he called his disciples . . . whom he himself would : and they went unto him.' Out of their number he chose twelve, and bestowed upon them the title of 'apostle,' the word signifying 'one that is sent.' 'And he chose from them twelve, whom also he named 'apostles : ' His declared object in appointing these twelve men was, (1) that they might be his companions, (2) that he might send them forth as preachers, and (3) that they might exercise powers of exorcism. 'And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out devils (Gr. demons).' Their names are given by Luke as follows : 'Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew and Thomas, and James *the son* of Alphæus, and Simon which was called the Zealot, and Judas *the son (or, brother)* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which was the traitor.' Alford notes that the words in italics are 'not expressed in the original.' It is well to have put them in different type, but it might have been better not to insert them, leaving room for the exercise of the reader's judgment in the translation as in the original.

We must needs suppose that Jesus had closely observed these men, and pondered their capabilities and characters, before selecting them for the carrying out of his designs. We know that Andrew, Simon and Philip had been associated with him long before ; and that he had previously given a special call to Andrew and Simon, James, John and Matthew. The surnames he gave to some indicate his readings of their characters : Simon was called Peter, 'Rock ; ' James and John 'he surnamed Boanerges, which is Sons of Thunder.' The last named of the apostles earned for himself the damning title of 'traitor,' the three evangelists noting that he became the betrayer of Jesus.

Comparing the lists given by the three evangelists, Judas of James is named by Matthew Lebbaeus, and by Mark Thaddæus ; and Simon the Zealot is called by Matthew and Mark 'the Cananean,' which Alford says is not a local name, but is derived from Canan, which is equivalent to Zelotes.

The readiness with which these twelve men responded to the call of Jesus may be taken as evidence of the influence he had gained over his disciples. He had but to select as many as he thought fit, and forthwith they ranged themselves by his side, willing to share his labours and his perils. For by this time it was clear that Jesus was not accepted as an orthodox teacher by the rulers of the Jewish Church, but would be relentlessly persecuted by them as promulgating heretical and dangerous doctrines. Had men of acknowledged reputation and influence sided with him, he could have made use of their gifts in prosecuting the cause he had at heart. Had a few only of the Pharisees declared themselves his disciples, he might have chosen them to keep him company, and by their means have worked from above downwards to the lower ranks of society. But now he could only attempt to work upwards : a far more difficult task, the Teacher himself being under a ban, and his apostles men of small, if any, reputation. No wonder his mind was greatly exercised at this eventful period, so that on the eve of coming to a decision he sought, in the silence of the night and of the mountain solitudes, divine



guidance. It was then, probably, he resolved to face all risks; to work with such instruments as were ready to his hand; to raise up out of the honest labouring class among whom his lot had been cast, a small band of devoted followers, some of them fishermen, one of them a tax-collector, and with them alone, without waiting to gain any disciples of learning or position, to enter upon a grand crusade of evangelization. Apart from the hostility of the Pharisees, there was much to encourage him. His popularity was wonderful; a vast multitude was even now, on his descent from the mountain, gathered from all quarters, even the most remote, to listen to his teaching and to receive the benefit of his preternatural powers of healing. 'And he came down with them, and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judæa and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases.' This astounding notoriety was not without a cause, nor did it spring up on a sudden. It was the result of a long course of teaching and working through the whole of Galilee; to that Matthew attributes the fame of Jesus, and adds that it had extended far to the north-east of Galilee even, penetrating to the utmost parts of Syria. 'And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel (or, good tidings) of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria.' Mark also gives a graphic account of the popularity attaching to Jesus, telling of his retirement to the sea, and that the multitude from distant parts was so great that Jesus was compelled to have a boat waiting upon him, that he might escape the pressure of the crowd. 'And Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed: and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did (or, all the things that he did), came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him.' Matthew's account is equally vivid. He describes the various diseases which were cured by Jesus, and the number of places from whence the people resorted to him. 'And they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with devils (or, demoniacs), and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and *from* beyond Jordan.' This list of names is not a little startling. Let us try to realise what it signifies, by taking rough measurements. Galilee was a region about 50 miles long and 20 miles broad. From Capernaum to Tyre was 40 miles, and to Sidon 50 miles, north-west. Decapolis lay as far in the opposite direction, to the east. Jerusalem and Beyond Jordan were 80 miles to the south, whilst Idumæa was some 50 still further south. Over the whole of that extensive region the name and fame of Jesus reached. That in itself was sufficiently wonderful; but that from all those parts men should have been attracted to him, was still more so. A journey of 50, 100 or 150 miles in those days was no light undertaking. We are not bound, however, to assume that the inhabitants of the various places named had all left their homes with

6 Luke 17

4 Mat. 23, 24

3 Mark 7-9

4 Mat. 24, 25

the set purpose of seeing and hearing Jesus. Doubtless a variety of causes drew together these representatives of different localities. Probably business took many of them to Galilee. If from the ports of Tyre and Sidon there was a constant stream of traffic for the supply of goods overland to Judæa, Galilee would naturally be the point where the trade converged, and thither men would resort from all quarters. Moreover, the Jews were eminently a travelling people, as appears from 2 Acts 5—11, where we read of them as being at Jerusalem 'from every nation under heaven,' from as far as Rome even. But whatever the reasons which combined to bring together so great and mixed a concourse, certainly no Teacher before or since has ever had so large a following. Nor is that to be marvelled at, for alike in words and works he excelled all others. In his person there resided some subtle influence, a contagion of healing, which conveyed itself by the mere touch. 'And all the multitude sought to touch him: for power came forth from him and healed *them* all.' The evangelists dwell especially on his power over demoniacs. They describe, in terms which cannot be explained away, the demonstrated existence of spiritual beings harbouring in human forms,—spirits conscious of the might of Jesus, constrained to do him homage, confessing him through the mouths of the possessed, and addressed by him in words of reproof and command. 'And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he charged them much that they should not make him known.' With the expulsion of the demons health of body and mind was restored. 'And they that were troubled with unclean spirits were healed.'

Although Jesus had now been preaching for some time, we have learnt comparatively little as to the matter of his discourses. His first sermon in Nazareth was reported with some fulness, and his conversation with the Samaritan woman is given in detail; but except in those two instances we have but faint indications of his style and doctrine. A similar obscurity hangs over the earliest acts of his ministry. We have found some difficulty in following his steps between Judæa and Galilee, owing to the fragmentary way in which the information is given. Nor is this to be wondered at. On the contrary, it is just what might be expected in the early history of any great Teacher. Until the importance of his words became recognized, few would be at the pains to record them; at least, as regards any lengthened discourse. But now that he has chosen twelve disciples to be constantly in his company, we may expect to find fuller and more careful records. This is actually the case. We meet at once with a long sermon of Jesus, remarkable alike in thought and structure. Yet here again some uncertainty arises, as to whether Matthew and Luke are giving the same discourse. There is great similarity, and there are great differences, so that critics are divided in opinion. This also is what might be anticipated. It was no one's business in particular to report the words as they fell from the speaker's lips, even if any one present were expert enough to do so. In all probability the reporters trusted much to memory, and to short notes taken hastily at the time. The portions remembered and noted down by one person and another would sometimes coincide exactly, sometimes diverge more or less, and at other times appear to be quite in-

6 Luke 19

3 Mat. 11, 12

6 Luke 18

dependent of each other. The writing of one sentence by a listener would account for his having missed another sentence ; and the idea or expression which would impress one mind, might fail to fix itself in the memory of another. All that is but of small importance : the teaching itself is the chief thing to be considered ; and we shall best do justice to it by placing the narratives side by side, and piecing them together.

The choosing of the twelve apostles took place at early dawn, 'when it was day.' Afterwards Jesus 'came down with them, and stood on a level place,' and was there surrounded by an eager, thronging crowd. Seeing how numerous it was, Jesus again ascended the mountain ; probably most of those present did not care to climb it, and it would be known that his purpose in going thither was to teach, and not to heal. 'And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain : and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him : and he opened his mouth and taught them.' The expression 'opened his mouth' is peculiar. It may denote that Jesus had been simply healing, and only began to preach when he had seated himself on the mountain for that purpose. Alford, however, takes the words as 'a solemn introduction to some discourse or advice of importance,' and refers to 8 Acts 35 and 6 Eph. 19. Solemn, indeed, were the words Jesus uttered. He began by defining wherein happiness consisted ; for the word 'blessed' is rendered by Young, 'happy.' The poor spirited, the sad hearted, the meek minded, the lovers of right and truth, merciful souls, pure hearts, and those who make for peace: these are the truly happy. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' An inward sense of want ; the consciousness of lacking many things ; the feeling of helplessness which comes with poverty ; absence of self-esteem, of pride in one's own possessions : all this seems bound up in the words 'poor in spirit.' That is a desirable frame of mind. Why ? How ? Because the kingdom of heaven is theirs ; literally (Young) : 'theirs is the reign of the heavens.' Heavenly supplies are for those who feel their need of them : provision for the poor is the scheme of Providence ; care for the poor is the grand concern of heavenly rulership. It is so in the natural world : 'From heaven giving rains to us, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' Hunger comes to all alike, and it is the confession of a poverty which can only be supplied by the gifts of divine bounty. God's spiritual gifts come to us, and must be taken by us, in the same way. The sense of spiritual need, the soul's hunger, constrains us to satisfy ourselves out of such supplies as God has provided. 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand ;' and they who will can stretch out their hands towards and grasp it. Happy they who feel their want of it, and do so.

'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' Here indeed is 'gospel ;' something of the 'good news' which Jesus had set himself to proclaim. Sorrow is salutary ; grief will be assuaged ; sources of consolation will be opened up. Alford says : 'The mourning must be understood to mean not only that on account of sin, but all such as happens to a man in the spiritual life.' That is simply to insert two ideas which are not conveyed by or contained in the words of Jesus. He does not mention sin ; he does not restrict the consolation to the sorrows of what men are pleased to term 'the spiritual



life.' The observation is general. The scheme of divine Providence provides contrasts and compensations. That is the grand truth which the simple words of Jesus should bring home to the hearts of men. In the bitterness of those griefs which none of us can escape, this is the blessed hope Jesus would have us lay hold of: 'Happy the mourning—for they shall be comforted' (Young). It is not for us to introduce conditions and restrictions which Jesus did not put into the words he uttered.

5 Mat. 5

'Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.' A vision this of a transformed world. From the first ages, men of might and valour have fought for its possession. But even the warlike David had foretold a change of spirit and of times.

37 Ps. 10

'For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be :

Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he (or, it) shall not be.

11

But the meek shall inherit the land ;

And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.'

The attitude of mind which will suit those days, is the best for men at all times. To fight, to conquer, to gain, to hold : that may seem desirable enough now : but the possessors and their possessions are alike transitory. The reign of right, and innocence, and peace, must be established in the world. The mind of Jesus flew forward to that time, when there will be 'abundance of peace, till the moon be no more ;' and in view of it he declared : 'Happy the meek—for they shall inherit the land' (Young).

72 Ps. 7

5 Mat. 6

'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.' The word 'righteousness,' in English, has become the sole property of theologians : probably it is never used now in connection with any of the ordinary concerns of life. For this reason we must be careful to ascertain its proper meaning when used in Scripture. The import of the word appears on the face of it : right, rightness, rectitude, righteousness. On referring to a Concordance, it will be found that in every quotation the word 'rightness' may be substituted for 'righteousness,' not only without distorting the sense of the passage, but in many cases bringing out a fulness and precision of meaning which otherwise would have failed to show itself. In the German and French versions the word used bears the same significance : 'Gerechtigkeit,' 'justice.' Therefore the allusion of Jesus is to an intense desire for rectitude, a longing to do the things which are right and just. That is often a hard matter ; nor is it always easy to know even what is the right thing to do. But if rectitude, taking the word in all its bearings—moral, intellectual, social—be desired by us as the very bread of our life, then we may rely upon obtaining it, and living by it. 'Happy those hungering and thirsting for righteousness—for they shall be filled.' (Young).

7

'Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.' A man's disposition and habit of life reacting upon himself : a consideration for others repaid in the same coin ; benefits bestowed falling back upon ourselves : Jesus speaks of this as a fixed law of Providence. God will deal with us as we deal with others. That doctrine was enunciated by David :

18 Psal. 25, 26

'With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful ;

With the perfect man thou wilt shew thyself perfect ;



With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure ;

And with the perverse thou wilt shew thyself froward.'

'Happy the kind—for they shall find kindness.' (Young).

'Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.' To grasp <sup>5 Mat. 8</sup> the sentence we must take pains to understand the words. Purity must not be restricted to the sense of freedom from any one particular form of vice. We read of 'pure oil,' 'the pure candlestick,' 'pure wool,' 'pure water,' 'pure linen : ' the word is applicable to anything in its natural, uncontaminated condition. 'Pure words' are words uttered in sincerity and free from falsehood. Pure dealings are just dealings : 'Shall I be pure with wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights?' A pure intellect is a clear, candid intellect, pure truth is truth free from error.

The word 'heart,' as used in Scripture, has a wide significance. Jesus speaks of the heart as the source of thought and action. 'Out <sup>15 Mat. 19</sup> of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings.' 'The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good ; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil.'

Therefore, purity of heart is, in fact, rectitude of intention, and branches out in all directions, mental and moral.

'They shall see God.' The term 'God' must be taken in its full significance, as denoting a Ruler, Governor, Lord. Purity of heart brings man into harmony and connection with the divine Ruler. God can be seen only through his works : 'Dwelling in light un- <sup>6 i. Tim. 16</sup> approachable ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.' Our vision of God is the facing of God's truths and workings. This may come to pass in many ways, and may often be least shared in by those who hug most closely and confidently the sense of their own morality or orthodoxy. Intellectually, men of science are men 'pure in heart : ' they gaze with clear, inquisitive, unprejudiced eyes upon all natural phenomena, and deducing thence one truth after another, they learn to see God by the world He has made and the laws He has appointed. Astronomers and geologists, for instance, have had to fight their way Godward, through blinding mists of error and superstition, and against a host of foes misled by their own false dogma, or false application of the dogma, of Scriptural inspiration, and all unconscious of the wrong and injury they did to the true inspiration of genius and of patient, humble-minded investigation.

Morally, we are all learning the need of being 'pure in heart.' The looking at a lie blurs and blinds our eyesight ; the yielding to a vice robs life of its charm and joy ; an impure heart and life is out of harmony with God's universe. By these things we lose sight and touch of Him ; and only in proportion as we become truthful, sincere, without offence towards God and man, can we rest on the bosom of divine Providence, and see God in the ways in which He waits to reveal himself. 'Happy the clean in heart—for they shall see God.' (Young).

'Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called sons of <sup>5 Mat. 9</sup> God.' The word 'peacemakers' occurs here for the first time in Scripture. This new word is the sign of a new order of teaching. Human history had from the first ages chronicled the deeds and praises of warriors, but it was reserved for this prophet of Nazareth

52 Isa. 7

to glorify the office of peacemakers. It was for him to make the practical application of those glorious visions of peace which had been revealed to and proclaimed by the prophets who went before. In the sermon on the Mount Jesus stands forth as the foretold herald of peace: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' His commendation of peacemakers is not to be regarded as mere verbal eulogy: they are called 'sons of God' because they are doing God's will and work. No particular mode of making peace is indicated. Whatever stops the flow of strife, and binds man to man, is desirable. No matter how the end is brought about: if the fruit is good, the tree must needs be good. Commerce is the handmaid of Christianity in this particular. Her triumphs are bloodless; she binds with the ties of self-interest nations sundered by differences of language and inherited warlike rivalries. The merchant is more of a peacemaker than the theologian.

The application by Jesus of the term 'sons of God' to peacemakers, indicates that such a form of expression was in general use: a consideration which may serve to modify the prevalent idea that the title 'Son of God' applied to Jesus involves divinity. 'Happy the peacemakers—for they shall be called sons of God.' (Young.)

Turning to Luke's narrative, we find a discourse delivered by Jesus very similar to this sermon on the Mount, but not so long, and with differences as well as omissions. This is especially the case with the beatitudes. Those in Matthew refer to character: the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, those longing for the right, the kind, the pure in heart, the peacemakers. Those in Luke refer to individuals, to disciples then listening to Jesus, and there is an altogether different train of thought. Obviously the discourses are not identical.

They start from the same key note, but the melody—and no sweeter or more heavenly melody than this sermon on the Mount ever sounded upon earth—is varied both in form and import.

6 Luke 20, 21

'Blessed *are* ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed *are* ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are* ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.' The poverty is not described as spiritual; the hunger is not restricted to righteousness; a fit of weeping does not necessarily indicate a mourning disposition. All that is brought out here is the blessedness and certainty of change and contrast. We do the Speaker no honour, but injustice, if we insert ideas which the words themselves do not convey. We must accept the teaching as it stands: each discourse speaks for itself. Here we find nothing dwelt upon but the blessed law of compensation. Though poor, we are heirs of God's kingdom; hunger will be followed by satiety; weeping by laughter. In other words: all sorrowful experiences are transitory. God has made them so, and it is a blessed thing to recognize the fact, and dwell, in hope, upon it. So much, at least, of God's gospel, can be grasped by all, and always.

24. 25

But we must not shrink—Jesus did not shrink—from admitting the reverse side of this truth. 'But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you, ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.' Jesus is simply bidding men take the laws

and dispensations of Providence as they find them. Changes of fortune come to us as surely, and as beneficently, as the changes of day and night. Men prefer light to darkness, but both are salutary. It is pleasant to be rich, satisfied, mirthful : but we must all grow poor—at death, if not before ; we must become conscious of needs unsupplied ; we cannot escape the touch of grief. Be hopeful in adversity ; be moderate in prosperity : that seems to be the lesson here conveyed by Jesus. He takes extremes on both sides : poverty, hunger, tears ; wealth, repletion, laughter ; and he declares that neither extreme can be permanent. Face that fact, and frame your life accordingly. Remember the grand law of compensation. It may be forgotten : in adversity to the loss of hope, in prosperity to the loss of principle ; but it cannot be avoided. ‘Happy the poor, for yours is the reign of God. Happy those hungering now, for ye shall be filled. Happy those weeping now, for ye shall laugh . . . But wo to you—the rich, for ye have your comfort. Wo to you who are filled, for ye shall hunger. Wo to you who are laughing now, for ye shall mourn and weep.’ (Young.)

Jesus applies the same doctrine to the effects of a conscientious discharge of duty on the part of his disciples. ‘Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ The striving after moral rectitude is not always an easy thing ; when devotion to a sacred cause brings men into collision with the prejudices, principles, or interests of others, the spirit of animosity is kindled, and woe to the Reformer against whom it burns. He may take to himself only one consolation, but that is all sufficient : he is heir to a better kingdom, where disorder, hatred and persecution are unknown, and all things are regulated by heavenly laws. ‘Happy those persecuted for righteousness’ sake—for theirs is the reign of the heavens.’ (Young.) 5 Mat. 10

To the disciples of Jesus this would especially apply. He leads them to anticipate reproach, opposition, slander, and he bids them consider it a blessing to suffer for his cause. ‘Blessed are ye when *men* shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.’ Let them find comfort in such experiences, and regard them as the seal of divine approval set upon their ministry. ‘Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.’ It is not merely a present joy which is here indicated, but the anticipation of a great recompense, and that not of the earth, nor on the earth, but ‘in the heavens’ (Young). The teaching of Jesus is based upon a foundation of morality and Providence which extends beyond the range of this life, and includes the experiences of some other state of being in a higher world. „ 11

The words reported by Luke differ somewhat from Matthew, and a greater emphasis is thrown into the invitation to rejoicing. Probably Luke is reporting another discourse, that in which, as we have seen, each blessing had its counterpart ‘woe.’ ‘Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap *for joy* : for behold, your reward is great in the heaven : for in the same manner did their fathers unto the prophets.’ The Revisers have retained the italicised 5 Mat. 22  
„ 23



additions of the Authorised Version, 'from their company,' and 'for joy;' but Dr. Young's literal rendering is sufficiently plain, and more graphic: 'when they shall separate you, and reproach, and cast out your name as evil . . . rejoice in that day, and leap, for lo, your reward is great in the heaven.'

6 Luke 26

In the discourse given by Luke, the antithesis of this was supplied by Jesus. 'Woe *unto you*, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets:' in the Tauchnitz edition it is noted that in this verse—only—the words 'unto you' are omitted in the three oldest MSS. Tischendorf accordingly retains them in verses 24 and 25, and omits them from verse 26. The Revisers insert them in italics in verse 26, a gloss which probably mars the true sense, and also italicise them in the previous verse, which seems to have been an oversight. It is easy to understand why the 'woe' is not here restricted to the persons addressed. They were the appointed prophets—teachers—of men. When persecuted, they could take comfort to themselves: 'rejoice ye in that day;' but if they gained the world's approval, it would be at the sacrifice of truth, and the consequences would be disastrous, not only to themselves, but also to those to whom they prophesied smooth things: the 'woe' in that case would not be personal merely, but general.

5 Mat. 11

6 Luke 22

The expression in Matthew, 'for my sake,' is replaced in Luke by 'for the Son of man's sake.' As the words 'Son of man' often occur, it is important to consider carefully the meaning which properly attaches to that form of expression. It occurs above ninety times in Ezekiel, and is the title by which that prophet was addressed. It is not too much to say that there in every case it is equivalent to 'Man,' and in modern language might be replaced by that single word. For instance: 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet;' 'thou, son of man, be not afraid of them;' 'thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee:' in each case we might adopt the word 'man' without altering the sense, and so on throughout Ezekiel. The antithesis to the expression 'Son of man' is found in Daniel: 'The aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.' 'Son of God' must be taken to denote resemblance to and oneness with divinity, and 'Son of man' resemblance to and oneness with humanity. It by no means follows from 'for my sake' being in Matthew and 'for the Son of man's sake' in Luke, that whenever Jesus uses the expression 'Son of man' he refers to himself only. It seems most likely that these were separate discourses, and we may venture to give to the words in Luke a wider meaning than is generally assigned to them. Persecution for the sake of Jesus would bring a blessing; persecution for the 'Son of man,' for humanity in general, would also bring a blessing. All teachings and labours for the good of mankind come within the scope of this promise. Scientific truth has its martyrs, quite as much as religious truth. Too often, alas! in blind zeal, the professed teachers of the latter have persecuted the teachers of the former. Think of Galileo, of Columbus, of Hugh Miller, of Jenner, of Darwin: where is the Leader in astronomy, in discovery, in geology, in medicine, in natural history, who has not been persecuted, and that chiefly by men who have arrogated to themselves an acquaintance with divine truth, and believed themselves to be contending for it? From the mountain top on which he preached,

2 Eze. 1, 6, 8

3 Dan. 25



Jesus looked down and forward, not upon a narrow sect of theologians, but upon mankind and upon the ages. For all who receive his words, and act in his spirit, and seek the truth, living by and for it, his assurance stands emblazoned: 'Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.'

On the foothold of this truth we may boldly rise to another. If the words of Jesus bear this wide application, then we must not dare to halve his promise, but take it in its integrity: 'Rejoice in that day, and leap: for behold, your reward is great in heaven.' This gospel is for all that can receive it. Heavenly compensations are not restricted to those who profess, under the name of 'Christianity,' a certain creed, submit to certain rites, base their hopes in a certain 'scheme of salvation,' and declare their adhesion to certain mysterious dogmas, which lie outside the sphere of human duties and intelligence, concerning the divinity of Jesus, and the worship of a Trinity in Unity and a Unity in Trinity. Let us go back to the simple teaching of the great Founder of our religion. His words are clear, and the sense and spirit of them, here and elsewhere, are often wholly alien from the glosses and conventional interpretations which, growing in the course of centuries, have clung to and obscured them. Let all seekers and promulgators of truth take comfort in the ideas respecting a future state of recompense revealed by Jesus. In whatever department of knowledge they labour,—science, literature, art, theology,—they all alike work in God's world, and can find and teach no truth which is not His. Many champions of 'orthodoxy' there are, branding illustrious men as 'atheists,' who should go and learn what this meaneth: 'With lies ye have grieved the heart of the righteous, 13 Eze. 22 whom I have not made sad.'

Addressing his disciples, persecuted for his sake, Jesus dwelt upon their importance to the world. He compared them to 'the salt of the earth,' the universal condiment which flavours men's daily food, and best preserves it from putrefaction. It would be scarcely possible to supply its place; its properties are unique, and if they should be lost, nothing could restore the missing pungency. 'Ye are the salt 5 Mat. 13 of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' All its value would be gone, beyond redemption, and it would be cast away as worthless. 'It is thenceforth good for nothing, 13 but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.' Dr. Thomson, in 'The Land and the Book,' mentions a case which came under his own observation: where a merchant of Sidon had stored up a quantity of salt in cottages with earthen floors, in consequence of which the salt was spoiled, and Dr. Thomson saw large quantities of it literally thrown into the street, to be trodden under foot of men and beasts. (Alford.)

The simile implies that in the doctrine of Jesus, to be promulgated by his disciples, there was something peculiar, a 'salt' which had no counterpart in anything else, which was necessary for the health and comfort of everyone, and for which no effectual substitute could be found. Carrying the idea onward, and to deepen in the minds of his disciples a sense of their importance to mankind, Jesus compared them to light itself. 'Ye are the light of the world.' In them were centred rays of truth and of rectitude by which they and others must

be guided. The disciples of Jesus could not be obscured; they would be raised above the ordinary level of humanity. Let them recognize the conspicuousness of their high position. 'A city set on a hill cannot be hid.' A light once kindled, and thenceforth self-luminous, must needs be placed in such a position as to attract the eyes of men. 'Neither do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house.' Let no disciple of Jesus seek to be such in secret. What-ever light is in them comes 'down from the Father of lights,' and should shine out for man's good and God's glory. 'Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Jesus was thinking rather of moral than of intellectual light: the light of a right life, 'good works.' A man need not preach, in order to disseminate the light within him: he has only to act rightly, openly, standing forth unostentatiously but courageously, conspicuously, doing his own work in his appointed place.

In the opening of the following sentence Jesus seems to be repelling some calumny which had been directed against his teaching. 'Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets.' Remembering the opposition his teaching had encountered from the scribes and Pharisees, and the contentions which Jesus had held with them respecting the observance of the sabbath, we can easily understand how a slander of this kind might have got into circulation. Even in our own day, those who plead, in the spirit of Jesus, that 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath,' have to meet the same charge of wishing 'to throw down the law or the prophets' (Young). Jesus declared that the object of his mission was the very reverse of that. 'I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.' His life's aim was, not the reversal of the law, but obedience to the law; it rested upon a foundation as stable as that of the universe itself; man might as soon attempt to annihilate the earth and pull down the sky, as to sever the connection between his moral nature and the divine law by which it must be regulated. 'For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.' Alford explains: 'Jot (Iota) is the Hebrew Jod, the smallest letter in the alphabet: tittles, literally horns, horn-like projections, are the little turns of the strokes by which one Hebrew letter differs from another similar to it.' The words 'till all things be accomplished' may be understood as indicating that the divine law and teachings must continue until they have become so interwoven with man's nature as to be no longer needed: when that end has been attained, and not till then, law and prophets will pass away.

The new condition of life, 'the reign of the heavens,' which Jesus proclaimed, lay wholly within the range of the divine law. The man who should take upon himself to overthrow or disparage the authority of the least of the divine commandments, would be held in lowest estimation. 'Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.' The word 'break' does not appear to convey the proper sense of the passage. Dr. Young, who in his literal version

avoids as far as possible translating one word in various ways, here uses 'throw down' instead of 'break,' thus making the expression in verse 19 correspond with 'throw down' in verse 17. The verbs in the original are not, however, quite the same, that in verse 17 being *kataluō* and that in verse 19 *luō*. The former appears to convey a somewhat stronger sense than the latter : *kataluō* is defined : 'to dissolve, put down, make an end of, destroy, cancel ;' *luō* is defined : 'to loose, to loosen, unfasten, untie, slacken.'

There are not two codes of morality, two divine laws, one for this world and one for the next. God's laws in heaven and earth rest upon the same basis ; change of state does not alter His will ; the gospel dispensation does not abrogate man's duties or abolish man's needs. None can build, here or elsewhere, on any other foundation than that laid down by God, and the only superiority of one over another must ever consist in submission and devotion to the divine commands : 'But whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be <sup>5 Mat. 19</sup> called great in the kingdom of heaven.'

Far from loosening the bonds of duty and self-discipline, Jesus sought to draw them tighter. Scribes and Pharisees had denounced him as a breaker of God's law. Now he rises up and declares that such narrow rectitude as they could lay claim to, was not sufficient to secure for them or any one a place in the new and heavenly state. 'For I say 20 unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Young's rendering is as follows : 'For I say unto you, that if your righteousness abound not above that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the reign of the heavens.'

Jesus went on to illustrate in various ways the breadth and depth of the divine law. He took first the case of murder. 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time (to the ancients—Young), 'Thou shalt not kill.' Having quoted the divine command, Jesus referred to the human judgment which followed upon its infringement. 'And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement.' 21 Alford explains this to mean 'the courts in every city, ordered Deut. xvi. 18, and explained by Josephus Antt. iv. 8, 14, to consist of seven men and to have the power of life and death.' But Jesus says that not only actual murderers stand in danger of that judgment, but every one who cherishes an angry feeling. From that, murder springs : of the seeds of anger, not one in a million may live to blossom out as murder ; but in every case there is the danger of it, and of coming within range of the tribunal which punishes murder by death. 'But I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.' 22 The Revisers have omitted the words 'without a cause' after 'brother.' They are not found in the two oldest MSS. Alford says : 'Jerome pronounces the words spurious ; but the ancient authorities are much divided.' It is scarcely to be supposed that any one would have ventured to omit so important a qualification if it had been found in the original MS. It seems more likely that the addition was made by some commentator.

Jesus qualified the observation in another way. He pointed out the gradations of anger, and of its manifestations, and the degrees of danger attendant upon each. 'But I say unto you, that every one 22



who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment ; and whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council ; and whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of (Gr. unto or into) the hell of fire.' The Revisers have noted that *Raca* is 'an expression of contempt,' that *thou fool* is 'Moreh, a Hebrew expression of condemnation,' and that *the hell of fire* is in Greek 'Gehenna of fire.' Young's rendering is as follows : 'But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother without cause, shall be in danger of the judgment : and whosoever may say to his brother, Empty fellow ! shall be in danger of the sanhedrim (Gr. sunedrion) : and whosoever may say, Rebel ! shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire.' Alford observes : 'There were among the Jews three well-known degrees of guilt, coming respectively under the cognizance of the local and the supreme courts ; and after these is set the Gehenna of fire, the end of the malefactor, whose corpse, thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, was devoured by the worm or the flame . . . . The "judgment" inflicted death by the sword, the "council" death by stoning, and the disgrace of the "Gehenna of fire" followed as an intensification of the horrors of death.'

The idea conveyed by the words of Jesus is this : Murder is anger carried to the extremity of injury. Therefore in anger resides the danger : it may be at the outset a mere spark ; it may develope into a flame ; it may break out into a conflagration. Beware equally of the spark, the flame, the raging fire. There are appointed means of dealing with each. Every outburst of anger must be thwarted ; it stands exposed to the judgment of men. If you give it free course, you must take the consequences ; if, in proud self-esteem, you evince it by contempt of your brother, you stand in the greater danger ; if you pass on to the stage of opprobrious railing and condemnation, you have exposed yourself to the risk of committing actual murder, and of bearing a felon's doom.

Jesus, speaking of the divine command, 'Thou shalt not kill,' dealt with the penalty of death which was decreed to be inflicted by human hands. That is very obvious : there is no allusion to any other—to divine-judgment, or any after-judgment. The comments of Dean Alford, however much they may agree with current ideas, are altogether misplaced and misleading. He writes : 'Similarly, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, shall the sins even of thought and word be brought into judgment and punished, each according to its degree of guilt, but even the least of them before no less a tribunal than the judgment-seat of Christ . . . . The words (*Raca* and *Moreh*) here mentioned must not be superstitiously supposed to have any damning power in themselves, but to represent states of anger and hostility, for which *an awful account hereafter* must be given.' All such assertions, by way of explanation of this discourse of Jesus, are unauthorized. If he had meant his hearers to understand his words in that sense, surely he both could and would have given indications of such a meaning. Instead of alluding to some 'awful account to be given hereafter,' Jesus deduced the practical lesson, that a man's state of mind towards his brother is a matter of greater importance than the offering of gifts to God, whether with the object of deprecating His judgment, or securing His favour, or expressing our gratitude to Him. So important is it that a man should be free from all anger



and consciousness of wrong with respect to his fellows, that Jesus counsels us to interrupt even the solemnity of divine worship for the sake of prior reconciliation. 'If therefore thou art offering thy gift 5 Mat. 23, 24 at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.'

The admonition of Jesus implies that in our most solemn acts of worship thoughts connected with our social life and duties will naturally arise. Far from counselling their dismissal, he indicates their supreme importance. How different this from the exhortations one sometimes hears about the obligation of throwing aside in God's sanctuary every thought of the world and its business! We should rather encourage the habit of mingling, in the quiet hours of the sabbath, our worldly affairs and anxieties with our religion. It were well to ask ourselves at such times: Has my brother aught against me? Am I sufficiently liberal in dealing with my servants? Is it right for me to push the laws of political economy to their extreme, by letting that old dependant go into the workhouse, by hard grinding down in price of what I buy, and deteriorating the quality of what I sell? Is it just for me to go on trading in spite of a clearly-revealed deficiency of assets, holding my head as high as ever, speculating, in fact, with the capital of my neighbour, because I have no longer any of my own? Surely there would be less injustice, deception, fraud, loss, in the commercial world, if business were wedded to religion, instead of being divorced from it on the mistaken plea that they are incompatible with each other. The due performance of social obligations is more acceptable in the sight of God than any worship of Him apart therefrom.

Desiring, it would seem, to impress upon his hearers the importance of acting justly, the certainty of being eventually compelled to do so, and the risk and penalty attendant upon refusal and delay, Jesus went on to say: 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art with him in the way: lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou have paid the last farthing.' Tischendorf renders: 'Be well disposed toward thine adversary quickly;' Young: 'Be agreed with thine opponent quickly;' Beza's Latin version: 'Esto amicus adversario tuo, cito.' The illustration obviously conveys the lesson that it behoves us to settle all differences promptly and justly. The rule of right is sacred and insuperable: wrong may prevail for a time, but there is a power of retribution inherent in the constitution of human society; the claims of our brother will make themselves heard, and there are ways of enforcing restitution. Jesus counsels his disciples to judge fairly, even in their own quarrel, to settle disputes in a friendly spirit, conscious in themselves of the final triumph of whatever is true and just. Surely this teaching, taken in its clear, natural sense, is sufficiently important. It is altogether marred and weakened by such comments as these of Dean Alford. He writes: 'The sense may be given: As in worldly affairs, it is prudent to make up a matter with an adversary before judgment is passed, which may deliver a man to a hard and rigorous imprison-

ment, so reconciliation with an offended brother in this life is absolutely necessary before his wrong cry against us to the Great Judge, and we be cast into eternal condemnation.' What strange additions are these incorporated with the words of Jesus and the ideas conveyed by them! Alford proceeds: 'The adversary, in its abstract personification, is the offended law of God. . . The "way" in the interpretation, is the way in which all men walk, the "way of all the earth," of 1 Kings ii. 2, the "way whence I shall not return" of Job xvi. 22. . . . The minister is the officer of the court who saw the sentences executed. If we are called on to assign a meaning to it in the interpretation, it must represent the chief of those who in Ch. xviii. 34, are hinted at by "the tormentors," viz.—the great enemy, the minister of the divine wrath.' Such interpretations may be ingenious, and they have an air of great solemnity, but they are wholly alien from the teaching of Jesus, certainly unauthorized additions to his words, probably perversions of them.

Mat 27, 28 Still dealing with social duties, and upholding the obligations of God's law, Jesus proceeds: 'Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' The outward act of evil is but the fruition of a germ of thought previously indulged; the sin originates with the covetous desire; that yielded to, the man becomes the slave of his passion, an adulterer in heart, simply waiting and watching for his opportunity. Guard, therefore, the avenues of evil. Be freed, no matter at how great a cost, from unlawful desire. God's law is not without its why and wherefore; rather than transgress it, submit to anything, self-mutilation, self-immolation: lose your right eye rather than be led astray by it. The language is obviously figurative. 'And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee.' It is to the advantage of the whole nature to part with that portion which is diseased, rather than lose the blessing of health and run the risk of death and dishonour. 'For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell (Gr. Gehenna).' The body is more than any of its members, and no one of them when diseased must be suffered to poison the springs of life. The surgeon amputates the right hand when it becomes a source of danger, and it is wise to face even such a necessity as that. 'And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell (Gr. Gehenna).'

31 'It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.' This was the law laid down by 24 Deut. 1, 2 Moses: 'When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.' This placed the continuance of the marriage-bond to a great extent in the power of the husband. Jesus declares that such an arbitrary, unrestricted power was contrary to God's law. One cause only, namely unfaithfulness on the part of the wife, could justify the

separation. 'But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away <sup>5 Mat. 32</sup> his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress.' Moses had fenced round the husband's right by certain conditions : he must act according to a set form, and his decision must be irrevocable ; he was to write the bill of divorcement, to place it in the woman's hand, to hold no further intercourse with her, 'send her out of his house,' and in the event of her leaving or losing by death her second husband, he might on no account renew the conjugal relation. All these precautions were worthless in the eyes of Jesus : he repudiated the authority of the Mosaic permission, and asserted that the second husband, by marrying the divorced woman, became an adulterer. 'And whosoever shall marry her who is put away committeth adultery.' Jesus simply deals with the fact, apart from any consideration of guilt or punishment. He who dismissed his wife, thereby tempting her to throw herself into the arms of another man ; she, the innocent sufferer from her first husband's caprice, and however careful to legalise her second union with all due formalities ; and the man who became her second husband during the lifetime of the first : all were parties to a transaction which was essentially adulterous, that is—which brought about that mixed commerce of the sexes which is contrary to the constitution of our nature, and forbidden by the wisdom and will of God. There is no escape from the conclusion that Jesus in this matter displaces the Mosaic command in order to insist upon the divine command. He discriminates between the two, and it behoves all students of the Holy Scriptures to do the same. The commonly-accepted theory of inspiration stands terribly in the way of any such free and full exercise of private judgment. Let us not fear to follow the great Teacher in his method of dealing with Scripture. The divine element therein needs to be carefully sifted from the human. Jesus made no attempt to amalgamate the two. The precept of Moses clashed with the will of God : the permission for divorce was of human origin ; however expedient for the time being, it was not compatible with the deep, enduring needs of man's nature ; Jesus therefore desired its overthrow, and scrupled not to denounce as wrong a dispensation which had been granted by the great Jewish lawgiver, and had been acquiesced in and acted upon without question for centuries.

'Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou <sup>3</sup> shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.' The Revisers have retained the old word 'forswear,' the sense of which depends upon its context. In Craig's dictionary it is thus defined : 'To reject or renounce upon oath ; to deny upon oath ; *to forswear one's self*, to deny falsely ; to perjure one's self ; *v. n.* to swear falsely ; to commit perjury.' Young renders : 'Again, ye have heard that it was said to the ancients : Thou shalt not swear falsely (agrees with Tischendorf), but shalt pay to the Lord thine oaths.' We read, as a command given not by Moses but by God Himself : 'Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, so that thou profane the <sup>19 Lev. 12</sup> name of thy God : I am the Lord.' Young renders : 'Ye shall not swear by my name to a falsehood, or thou hast polluted the name of thy God : I am the Lord.' Again we read : 'This is the thing <sup>30 Num. 1, 2</sup> which the Lord hath commanded. When a man voweth a vow unto the Lord, or sweareth an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall



not break his word ; he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.' Again : ' When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it : for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee.' These quotations, which it would seem were the passages in the mind of Jesus, relate to the swearing to a fact and the swearing of a vow : the fact must be true, and the vow must be kept. But Jesus counsels that it is better to take no oath whatever : ' But I say unto you, Swear not at all.' The strength of an asseveration must rest upon the character of him who makes it. The custom of swearing by something outside and above one's self was illogical : a man's oath based upon and certified by what was not his own ! ' Neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God ; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet ; nor by (or, toward) Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.' Nor could a man properly swear by himself, seeing how little he is lord of himself ; not by his own head, inasmuch as he cannot change the colour of a single hair upon it. ' Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.' Cultivate rather an intense truthfulness of mind and spirit. A single yes or no, repeated once in order to show that it is uttered with due thought and deliberation, should be sufficient for every occasion. The straining after a form of expression more emphatic, is evidence of something wrong : a weak sense of truth, or an infirmity of purpose in the speaker, or a habit of lying in the world. ' But let your speech be, Yea, yea ; nay, nay : and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil *one* (or, evil).' Alford observes : ' The gender of *evil* is ambiguous.' Young left it so : ' of evil.' What is ambiguous in the original is best left so in the translation.

Jesus refers again to the Mosaic law : ' Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' This doctrine of retaliation was at the same time enforced and limited : ' If any man cause a blemish in his neighbour ; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him ; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth : as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered unto him.' That law of like for like, with respect to evil, Jesus would have his disciples erase from their minds. ' But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil (or, evil).' Alford notes : ' evil, *i.e.* here, " the evil man ;" " him who injures thee." Or, perhaps, in the indefinite sense, as before, evil, generally, " when thus directed against thee." Only, the other possible meaning there, " the evil One " is precluded here.' This illustrates the difficulty of varying the expression, and the danger of defining what in the original is indefinite. Young, who always strives to give a literal rendering, has : ' But I say to you, not to resist the evil.' On the other hand, Tischendorf renders : ' That ye resist not the evil man ;' and the American Revisers passed the alteration of our Revisers in silence.

Jesus was anxious his disciples should be wholly free, even at the cost of wrong, pain and humiliation, from the spirit of retaliation. Let them not seek to defend themselves by altercation and opposition. ' But whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' The exhortation went beyond the mere forbidding of revenge, for Jesus adds : ' And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.' Peace at any



price, even that of dishonour and wrong ! And as if that were not enough, Jesus continues : ‘ And whosoever shall compel (or, impress) <sup>5 Mat. 41</sup> thee to go one mile, go with him twain.’ A passive, uncomplaining, even cheerful submission to evils and injuries ! More than this : ‘ Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.’ This was put still more emphatically according to Luke’s record : ‘ Give to every one that asketh thee ; <sup>6 Luke 30</sup> and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.’

We stand amazed at the sublime audacity of the Preacher. These maxims run contrary to the ordinary rules of life, of common prudence, and of self-respect. For that very reason, we may be sure that the spirit which Jesus sought to infuse into our minds by such doctrines was, in his eyes, of supreme importance. There are crises in human history when, for some object of transcendent interest, men are accustomed to cast aside the recognized laws of caution and safety. For the final settlement of some great and burning question of national welfare, a people will rise in arms, neglect its industries, devote its sons to the sword and their widows to lamentation. That is the heroism of suffering and self-defence : Jesus teaches a heroism of suffering apart from self-defence. Better that, than remain under the subjection of a spirit of ill-will and selfishness. The key-note of the precept was struck at the beginning of the discourse, when Jesus bade his disciples fix their hopes on the heavenly kingdom, and rule their earthly life according to its laws. The emphasis of his teaching rested upon character, lowliness, meekness, rectitude, charity, purity, peace : these were his beatitudes ; but a man jealous for his rights, standing up to contend against wrong, intent upon self-defence, could not maintain the frame of mind, the quiet hope, the longing for a higher life, the intense submission to the divine will, which Jesus counselled. Either the present or the future must be sacrificed : choose an innocent and calm spirit, even at the cost of suffering and self-effacement ; that may seem foolish now, but it is the highest wisdom. How will our earthly hatreds and contentions look in the presence of death and futurity ? What shall we think of life’s petty struggles and quarrels, when all earthly concerns are done with, and we enter upon new activities, urged and aided by the character and dispositions formed during this life’s pilgrimage ?

In proclaiming commands so new and strange to mankind, the voice of Jesus could only reach and influence his disciples. To them these counsels were addressed ; on them they were—and are—incumbent. Others might adopt them partially, admire them afar off, deem them of heavenly origin, yet too exalted for mankind in general : that, even to this day, is the mental attitude of most of us with respect to them. For the perfection of individual character, whereby alone the regeneration of society can be effected, there is needed a spirit free from every thought of retaliation, patient, long-suffering, far-sighted even to the verge of heaven itself. To send forth men of that stamp into the world was the purpose of Jesus. Of such he desired to become the guide and leader, and for them his precepts, in their length and breadth, were designed.

We are carried on to another counsel of perfection. ‘ Ye have <sup>5 Mat. 43</sup> heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.’ We find no passage answering to that in the Jewish Scrip-

tures; Deuteronomy xxiii. 3-7 is the nearest approach to it. Alford says that the latter part of the saying is 'a gloss of the Rabbis.' 5 Mat. 44 Jesus would have it blotted out. 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies.' The Authorised Version proceeds: 'Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.' The two oldest MSS., followed by the Revisers, omit all except the words 'and pray for them which.' Probably the passage now omitted was incorporated into Matthew by some transcriber who 6 Luke 27, 28 had Luke's narrative before him. It occurs there: 'But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.' A nobler precept was never uttered. He who can put it into practice has risen far above human passions to the serene and heavenly heights of forgiveness. It is the law of retaliation reversed: no longer eye for eye and tooth for tooth, but good for evil; no mere sentiment, but love in action, kindness for hatred, blessing for cursing, earnest desires and entreaties for the welfare of those who treat us with despite. The condensed form in which Matthew gives 5 Mat. 44 the exhortation includes all at once. 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.' This applies not merely to isolated acts of ill-will, such as may rise up in ordinary intercourse, but to a course of systematic persecution. The disciples would find their efforts thwarted, and their life-work marred by opposing enemies. They must bear it all, showing themselves patient, passionless, un-revengeful, loving. Under all circumstances let them adhere to one golden rule of action: 'And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.' Our own sense of discomfort when 6 Luke 31 treated unjustly by others, is a call to us to act fairly, honourably and considerately towards our fellows.

Jesus urges a yet higher motive. 'That ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven.' The divine beneficence is poured forth 5 Mat. 45 without partiality and without exceptions. 'For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.' In Luke's record this is somewhat amplified and varied. 6 Luke 35 'But love your enemies, and do *them* good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind towards the unthankful and evil.' The words in the Authorised Version, 'hoping for nothing again,' are here replaced by 'never despairing.' Tischendorf gives the Sinaitic reading, 'causing no one to despair;' and the Revisers have noted that 'some ancient authorities read *despairing of no man*.' That is the frame of mind we should cherish in criticising the conduct of others: our bitterest foe may become, some day, our firmest friend.

Who, Jesus asks, would thank us for the easy virtue of reciprocating love? 5 Mat. 46 'For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye?' That law prevailed down to the very lowest level of society. 6 Luke 32 'Do not even the publicans (collectors or renters of Roman taxes) the same?' Those steeped in crime will do as much. 'For even sinners love those that love them.' And if the interchange of courtesy was to be restricted to those whom they regarded as brethren, in what would those Jews therein excel the heathens whom they held so cheap? 5 Mat. 47 'And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the Gentiles the same?' In this verse

the Revisers have replaced 'publicans' by 'gentiles,' following the two oldest MSS.

If, again, kind actions were to be shown only to those from whom we receive them; or if assistance be never given unless with the expectation of repayment: that would be to remain in the lowest grade of human fellowship. 'And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much.' Imitate, not the lowest of mankind, but the Highest Being. 'Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.' Our ideal must be—Perfection; our measure of love, the fulness of the Divine Love. 'Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Jesus next cautioned his hearers against the desire for human applause in the performance of their duties. 'Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them.' The words 'alms' in the Authorised Version is altered by the Revisers to righteousness, according to the two oldest MSS. Ostentation, self-esteem, the love of praise—these are fatal to sincerity of character. Such motives bring down no blessing from above: 'else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven.' How the heavenly Father recompenses, Jesus did not explain. Virtue is its own reward. The beneficial effect of a right action upon the doer of it, is determined and assured by the constitution of our moral nature. There is joy in the harmonious and proper working of our bodily and spiritual activities. The sense of duty done is like the rolling in of a wave of satisfaction upon the soul. But if the good deed be started by a bad or low motive, it is poisoned at the source. To seek the praise of men, is to throw into the background the approval of our own conscience, which should be to us as a revelation of the smile of God. 'When therefore thou doest alms (kindness—Younge), sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.' Alford observes: 'Lightfoot says, that he finds no trace of such a practice among the customs in almsgiving.' No doubt it was exceptional, but we can scarcely help taking the words literally. Men who were anxious to gain the favour of the people, for political or other purposes, might adopt such a form of publicity, as in our own days some will take care to give large subscriptions for local charities in the towns which they seek to represent in parliament. Beyond using the word 'hypocrites,' Jesus did not cast any severe condemnation on such men, or their motives. He simply pointed out that they gained at once their object. Of course the character becomes deteriorated by any act of hypocrisy; but about that they cared not, and they realized from their ostentation the object at which they aimed. 'Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward:—literally, (Alford) have in full, exhaust: not have their due reward.' Jesus would have us act after another fashion. 'But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:—no approach to display, but rather a set purpose to avoid it: Jesus chooses the hyperbolic expression to impress the lesson 'that thine alms may be in secret.' Then there will be a blessing both to the receiver and the giver. 'And thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense



thee.' Here, as well as in verses 16 and 18, the word 'openly,' is added in the Authorised Version, but the Revisers have omitted it, following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. This important correction modifies the sense of the passage. A mere change of punctuation would give it yet another meaning: 'That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth, in secret shall recompense thee.' Possibly that is the true meaning: the reward is secret, in the giver's bosom, in the approval of conscience, in the effect of the action upon 'the hidden man of the heart.' If otherwise, the translation, 'which seeth in secret,' is equivocal, and may denote either the secret on-looking of God, or God's looking into that which is secret. Luther gives the latter rendering: 'Der in das Verborgene siehet;' and the French version also, by an addition which is put in italics: 'Qui voit *ce qui se fait* en secret.'

6 Mat. 5

The next warning of Jesus was against the same vice of hypocrisy, manifested in the performance of prayer in public. 'And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets (broad places—Young: open spaces—Sharpe), that they may be seen of men.' It is a miserable and dangerous condition of mind and heart, when a man is so puffed out with self-consciousness as to care what is being thought and said about him by others with respect to the way in which he worships God. That is to turn our good into evil, to desecrate what is highest and most hallowed, to put our fellow creatures above God, and make ourselves and our detestable vanity a spectacle for men and angels. We get what we seek,—the observation, perchance the admiration of others—but we draw down no blessing from above.

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'Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward: 'they have their full reward.'

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It is better, unseen of men, to worship our unseen Father. 'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.' His eye pierces our deepest solitude; our heart-beats and heart-longings are audible to him; they are neither lost in the measureless void nor reflected back upon ourselves as empty echoes:

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'and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.' In

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respect of prayer Jesus gives another warning. 'And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.' Tischendorf renders: 'babble not like the Gentiles.' It was not a fault conspicuous in the Jews so much as in the heathen worshippers of false gods. The less of faith, the more of entreaty: the child who believes in the Father's love, power and willingness to give, will ask simply and but once, sure that any real want and proper wish will be fulfilled: but a child in doubt of having gained the father's ear or heart, will pass from the first request to clamorous repetitions, hoping to prevail by importunity. Let us feel sure that our heavenly Father is neither deaf, heartless, nor fickle, and that we may trust ourselves implicitly to his loving wisdom. 'Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.' Alford's comment is as follows: 'The repetitions of Paternosters and Ave Marias in the Romish Church, as practised by them, are in direct violation of this precept; the number of repetitions being prescribed, and the efficacy of the performance made to depend on it. But the

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repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the Liturgy of the Church of England is not a violation of it, nor that of the *Kyrie Eleison*, because it is not the number of these which is the object, but each has its appropriate place and reason in that which is pre-eminently a reasonable service.' Admitting all that, it will be wiser for us to purge ourselves from the fault of the Romanists, as the Jews were warned to avoid the example of the Gentiles. What of the length of the sabbath-morning service of the Church of England? It is three services rolled into one : the Morning Prayer, the Communion, and the Sermon. The Litany was an addition, 'to be sung or said after morning prayer on Sundays,' and the use of it is now becoming exceptional. The clergy in general, however, make no attempt to shorten the service in any other way, and it is not to be wondered at that the congregation shorten it for themselves, as far as custom permits, by leaving before the completion of the Communion. That is one reason, in itself a justifiable one, why there are so few regular communicants. The strain of so prolonged a service is too much for ordinary men and women, and transforms them, more or less, into spectators and listeners instead of worshippers. Prayer, long continued, loses its intensity, its character even, and becomes a mere formality. You may test the fact by a simple observation at one particular point of the service : watch the kneeling congregation at the end of 'the third collect for grace,' and out of the hundreds present you will find very few who rise promptly. Obviously their thoughts are elsewhere, and they need the pause, the rustle, to rouse them to the consciousness of what is going on, and that the prayers are ended in which they are supposed to have shared. The fact is the more significant, because it occurs at a comparatively early period of the service, and indicates a settled habit of inattention. It is a lamentable truth that this wandering of mind must, under our present system, grow into a custom difficult to shake off. Children are taught to kneel, when they cannot understand the prayers ; young men and women try to follow the words, but the strain is too much for prolonged attention ; the older members of the congregation know, from years of experience, that it is a physical and mental impossibility for them to concentrate their thoughts from first to last, however grand, delightful, soul-stirring the whole liturgy, in its details, is felt to be. The minister, acting as the mouth-piece of the congregation, using his voice throughout the praying, reading and preaching, is on a higher platform of thought and activity, and not in a position to appreciate the difficulties in the way of giving a silent and constrained attention. Let the solemn truth be recognized : as long as the clergy persist in this 'much speaking,' so long will they be training the laity to an inevitable, unconscious 'hypocrisy' in praying. The remedy is at hand. Let us have only one service at a time : the Morning prayer, without the Litany ; or the Litany alone ; or the Communion Service alone ; perhaps there would be small hope of a change without admitting the Sermon in any case. But clergymen and laymen are equally interested in shaking off from themselves our Lord's reproach : 'They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.'

Jesus having condemned vain repetitions, and the idea of any need for long prayers, on the ground that God knows all our wants prior

to the utterance of them, proceeded to give his disciples a form of prayer which would serve for a model. 'After this manner therefore pray ye.' There should be first the realization of God's relationship to us and of his presence above us. 'Our Father which art in heaven.' Young renders: 'Thus therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in the heavens.' The Revisers were cramped by the Rule laid down for their guidance, 'to introduce as few alterations as possible into the text;' otherwise they might have changed the archaic 'which' into the modern 'who,' as did the American Revisers, Tischendorf, Young and Sharpe in their translations.

'Hallowed be thy name.' A 'hallowed' thing signifies, in the Scriptures, something set apart from everything else of the kind: the priests, the fiftieth year, the king's court, the sabbath-day, the first born devoted to God, the censers used in divine worship, the shew-bread, the temple. The name of our heavenly Father must be above and apart from every other name: to him are due our lowliest homage, our loftiest praise, our deepest reverence, our fullest faith, our supremest love. We worship no abstraction, but a living, loving Father, as real to us and as fully realized by us as an earthly father. 'Thy kingdom come.' Young renders: 'Thy reign come:' the time when every creature shall be ruled according to the divine will. 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.' Young renders: 'Thy will come to pass,' which gives a different shade of meaning, and agrees with Luther's: 'Deine Wille geschehe,' and harmonises with the previous idea. The reign of God will be the coming to pass of his will. The words, 'as in heaven, so on earth,' could fall first only from the lips of a Teacher having supernatural knowledge. When Jesus taught such a prayer, and when he said, 'great is your reward in heaven,' he spoke as one to whom were known the mysteries of another life in another world.

'Give us this day our daily bread (Gr. our bread for the coming day).' Alford explains: 'The word rendered *daily* has been very variously explained. I . . . prefer the sense *required for our subsistence—proper for our sustenance.*' Young's rendering leans that way: 'Our appointed bread give us to-day.' Not the bread we may prefer, but the bread prepared and suited for us. Thus understood, there is added to the petition a tone of humble resignation.

'And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.' The Revisers have changed 'as we forgive' into 'as we . . . have forgiven,' which agrees with the Vatican MS. and also with the original reading of the Sinaitic MS., which was found subsequently altered by a later hand. Our debts to God may be either unfulfilled duties or the penalty due to actual sin. As our own forgiveness of a debt means the deliverance of the debtor from all claims and from any penalty attaching to non-payment, so the forgiveness we crave of God means more than a change in his attitude towards us: it must include the withholding or withdrawal of the punishment due to sin.

'And bring us not into temptation.' Is it likely that our heavenly Father will lead us into temptation? Is it needful to pray to him in order to hold him back from doing so? There must be either a shock to our moral consciousness, or a blind acceptance of an idea which we cannot understand or acquiesce in, unless we grasp the true import of the petition. From first to last the Lord's prayer is one of

submission to the divine will, and it is based upon the truth, 'Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.' We ask not that his ways should be changed in anything, but, on the contrary, that his will should come to pass everywhere and in all things; we desire to feed upon the bread he has appointed for us; we entreat the forgiveness he bestows, upon the condition he imposes of forgiving others; we submit to his leading, which is never into temptation, but is ever away from evil. In that sense only can our heart take up the petition: 'And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one* (or, evil).' Young renders: 'And mayest Thou not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.' Alford says: 'The adjective is here certainly neuter; the introduction of the mention of *the evil one* would seem here to be incongruous.' Luther's translation agrees with Young: 'Erlöse uns von dem Uebel.' The introduction of the word 'one' in italics by the Revisers can only signify that 'one' is not in the original, but seemed to them necessary to convey the sense. The American Revisers pass the alteration without protest, and Tischendorf has 'evil one.' As Young's professed aim is to be strictly literal and idiomatic, we may feel confidence in his rendering.

The doxology inserted in the Authorised Version is omitted by the Revisers and Tischendorf. It is not in the two oldest MSS., and Alford says: 'We find absolutely no trace of it in early times, in any family of MSS. or in any expositors.'

Jesus explained that the petition for pardon must necessarily be accompanied by the restriction indicated. 'For if ye forgive men <sup>d Mat. 14</sup> their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' The prayer refers to 'debts' and 'debtors,' that is to unfulfilled obligations. 'Trespasses' and trespassers conveys a somewhat wider meaning, that of actual offences. God's way of dealing with us is in accordance with our way of dealing with others. There must be some good reason for that law of action and reaction with respect to social life and duties; probably it would not be safe that a man should be delivered from the consequences attaching to his misdeeds until he realizes the cost and smart of wrongdoing and injustice. To forgive a debt involves often no small suffering and self-denial to the creditor; to forgive an offence, means submission to a wrong. 'My debtor has, in fact, appropriated to himself a portion of my life's labour and earnings; my adversary has injured me in property, or in reputation, or in peace of mind. Let it pass: I will seek no revenge, but suffer in silence.' A man in that frame of mind is a fit recipient of the divine mercy. He can appreciate God's pardon, but will not be tempted himself to commit a similar wrong to that which his neighbour has inflicted upon him. We learn to abhor evil more by bearing it and forgiving than we could by committing it and receiving forgiveness.

Jesus declared that God's forgiveness hinges upon our own, so that the one cannot be without the other. But in what way that law works is not explained. We know not to what extent there is, or is not, a special divine interposition in men's personal affairs. In some way, however, direct or indirect, by human or by superhuman agency, by the constitution of Nature or by an over-ruling Provi-



dence, we are assured that our heavenly Father takes cognizance of the conduct of his children, and deals with them as they deal with others.

Jesus gives yet another instance of men's way of 'acting'—of hypocrisy. 'Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad (sour—Yongg) countenance : for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast.' It was not that they pretended to fast, and did not, but that, actually fasting, they made the most of doing so, exaggerated the external signs of depression, taking care to let all men see that they were engaged in the duty of self-mortification. Away with such ostentation, said Jesus. These men get what they seek,—public observation ; but there is something higher to be thought of than that. 'Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face ; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.'

From the three instances of alms-giving, prayer, and fasting, adduced by Jesus, we are in a position to form some conclusion with respect to his views on human actions generally. He seems to hold that every act of our lives must have its natural and proper result, its 'recompense' or 'reward,' a reaction upon ourselves, which will depend upon the spirit and motives under the influence of which the action was performed. If expediency, self-interest, or vanity, be the impelling principle of a deed good in itself, our own character gains nothing by the performance of it, neither is there any resulting satisfaction to our conscience, for the moral nature is outraged and deteriorated by the touch of hypocrisy and self-seeking. But if the action springs from a sense of duty, is purposed in sincerity, and performed naturally and unostentatiously, then the doer of it, being loyal alike to himself, to men and to God, reaps according to his sowing : his feet stand upon the high places of integrity and truth, no mist born of low motives rises up to obscure his spiritual vision, he breathes in the healthy atmosphere of pure intentions, and the approval of his own conscience is to him as the voice of God. The 'inner man' has grown, been nourished and made happy. Can any better, fuller 'recompense' than this, be desired or expected from our heavenly Father ? It is one which is evolved from the constitution of our moral nature, and is therefore wholly of his giving. A 'recompense' from God is not necessarily of an external character : in secret he sees, in secret he rewards ; it needs only an alteration in the punctuation to bring out that idea clearly : 'That thine alms may be in secret : and thy Father which seeth, in secret shall recompense thee.'

'Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth, in secret shall recompense thee.' 'That thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father which seeth, in secret shall recompense thee.' If this reading is novel, it may be simply because men have been kept from it by the retention in the Authorised Version of the word 'openly' in each of the three verses. That bold addition made in three places to the sacred text by some transcriber in the early centuries, is in itself sufficient to warn us away from the interpretation designedly put upon these passages by the unauthorised insertion. But the suggested change



in the punctuation may be objected to on the ground that the words 'who seeth in secret' denote 'who seeth into that which is secret.' Admit that : still, without in any way altering the punctuation, the same sense is there, although not so clearly brought out. The omission of 'openly' leaves room for the free exercise of our judgment on the question. It is a rational belief, that every good deed done in sincerity brings its own blessing to the doer, which is lost to him if his motive is bad ; it is not reasonable to picture to ourselves God watching every coin we give, every prayer we say, every fast we keep, and giving or keeping back, either on each occasion or at some far distant time of judgment, something in the shape of a 'reward.' Even if the word 'openly' were admitted, Alford's explanation of it : 'before men and angels ; at the resurrection of the just,' would not be warranted by the context.

Having exhorted his disciples to perform their actions as in the sight of God rather than of men, Jesus now counsels them to live for the next world rather than for this. 'Lay not up for yourselves <sup>6 Mat. 19</sup> treasures upon the earth.' Young and Tischendorf render literally : 'Treasure not up for yourselves treasures on the earth.' Let them not amass on earth even the best things earth affords. The money which is ever passing from hand to hand, is kept bright by the useful wear and tear ; but wealth, in that or any other shape, stored up unused, is exposed to inevitable risks of depreciation or of robbery : 'where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through (Gr. dig through) and steal.' For 'consume' Young has 'disfigure' : the metal becomes rusted, the garment moth-eaten. There are better treasures than those of this world, and a safer storehouse. 'But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth <sup>19</sup> nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through (Gr. dig through) nor steal.' This lofty teaching is based upon the certainty of a life beyond the present. The unseen God, the unseen world, the unseen state of being : these formed the basis on which Jesus argued concerning human responsibilities, duties and hopes. That was the key-note struck at the opening of this Sermon on the mount. How can we lay up treasures in heaven ? By cultivating the heavenly frame of mind ; by carrying out the duties which Jesus has enjoined ; by living as in the sight of God ; by seeking the recompense which comes from him. The earthly life is not disparaged : it must be lived in all its fulness, in view of that higher life to which we are destined. The character must be moulded upon earth after the heavenly pattern. Jesus does not quench ambition : he encourages it. He sets before us the purest motives and the surest recompense. He would make us rich with the best wealth. That must be sought elsewhere ; it does not exist upon earth. Treasures laid up here involve lost labour, misplaced affections. 'For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.' <sup>20</sup>

How can we guide ourselves rightly and safely, if we fail to discern the realities of existence ? To see things as they are, clearly and accurately, is of the utmost consequence. 'The lamp of the body is the eye.' If that is 'sound' (Tischendorf), 'clear' <sup>21</sup> (Alford), 'perfect' (Young), the light of heaven penetrates into our inmost being. 'If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body <sup>22</sup> shall be full of light.' But if the eye performs not its function of

6 Mat. 23 seeing, all within is dark. 'But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.' If then our very faculty of seeing is lost, how intense must be the darkness in us and about us! 'If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness.' Alford renders: 'how dark is the darkness.' And Luther brings out the same meaning: 'Wie gross wird dann die Finsterniss selber seyn?' 'How great then will the darkness itself be?'

„ 24 Jesus next touched upon the impossibility of rendering a divided allegiance. 'No man can serve two masters.' The saying has come to be one of the world's proverbs, and probably is sometimes misapplied. It is quite possible to act honourably and justly between two parties, even when they have conflicting interests. It is equally possible for a man who is a free agent to act fairly to himself and to his client, rendering faithful service and taking only a legitimate recompense. The words of Jesus apply to something quite different: servitude and lordship; on the one side, entire submission, on the other, unquestioned authority. Young renders: 'None is able to serve two lords.' No amount of authority, in such a position, can enforce fidelity. The show of service, or a half-hearted obedience, may be extorted, but the sentiment of devotion to the master's interests depends upon the slave's free will. And if there be rival claimants of lordship, both cannot be satisfied. One of two things must happen: either the servant will labour for one heartily, out of love, and for the other perfunctorily, with ill-will; or he will throw aside the pretence of devotedness to the two, claim the right of a free agent, choose the service of one, and set at naught the demands „ 24 of the other. 'For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.' The conclusion Jesus draws from his argument is this: 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Alford explains: 'Mammon is the Chaldee word for riches.' Here is a very solemn warning against a very common fault. To how many does the pursuit of riches become an actual slavery! Jesus places Wealth and God in opposition: not wealth as a creature, for all that we have is from above, but wealth as personified, claiming to be a god. Let disciples take heed to deliver their souls from that. Its dominion begins by a want of faith in divine providence; and therefore Jesus counsels them to shake off „ 25 the feeling and habit of anxiety about earthly comforts. 'Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious (careful—Young) for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink: nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.' Let us not mistake the sense. Jesus does not say, Be not anxious for your life, for bread, for water, or for covering: dread on that score is rarely felt, by few only, and they of the very poor, who are not in danger of running the race for wealth, and devoting themselves to its pursuits to their souls' injury. The word 'what' relates to the kind and quality of meat, drink and clothing. We need not take thought about that: enough to preserve life is „ 25 sufficient for us, if we could only bring our minds to think so. 'Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?' If we were anxious only about that much, we should soon cease to be anxious at all. The love of superfluities, of luxuries, of showy dress, of pre-eminence: these are the temptations which bring us under the sway of mammon, and estrange us from the service of God. We see

the dumb creatures about us provided for by the bounty of divine providence. 'Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, 6 Mat. 26 neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them.' According to Luke, Jesus specially instanced the ravens: 'Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; 12 Luke 24 which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds!' The peculiar hardship and helplessness of the raven's life was proverbial:

'Who provideth for the raven his food, 38 Job 41  
When his young ones cry unto God,  
And wander for lack of meat?'

What earthly father would feed his birds and starve his children? Are not our lives more precious to our heavenly Father than the lives of birds? 'Are not ye of much more value than they?' The 6 Mat. 26 prolongation of our life, of more importance to us than anything else, cannot be accomplished by the most anxious thought. 'And ,, 27 which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature (or, age)?' Young renders: 'Add to his age;' Tischendorf, 'add to his lifetime.' Alford observes: 'The application of measures of space to time is not uncommon:

'Behold, thou hast made my days as handbreadths; 39 Ps. 5  
And my age is as nothing before thee.'

Being thus dependent upon God for our life, why should we take upon ourselves anxiety about providing for its luxuries? 'If then 12 Luke 26 ye are not able to do that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest?' And why be anxious about suitable apparel? 'And 6 Mat. 28 why are ye anxious concerning raiment?' Does not God deck out the unconscious, unlabouring wild-flowers in superlative beauty? 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither ,, 28, 29 do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.' If such wealth of beauty is provided for an inanimate flower, destined to bloom one day and to be cut down and withered on the next, must we not infer, in spite of the smallness of our faith, that our heavenly Father will provide for his children? 'But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, ,, 30 which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall* he not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?'

It were well for all of us, in our attire and personal adornment, to study the laws of beauty and of fitness. That would be a tacit recognition of the fact that our heavenly Father does care about such things, and only so shall we come to clothe ourselves becomingly in his sight. What absurdities of dress, what excrescences and deformities, has not fashion decreed! When men wore wigs and hair-powder, and rapiers; and ladies put black patches on their faces, and swelled out monstrously in hoops, humps and crinoline excesses, with towers and tufts of false hair upon their heads, and superincumbent weights of ribbons, artificial flowers and fruits on bonnets. And some show, too, an absurd fancy for what is ugly and unbecoming in the opposite direction, as in the poke bonnets of quakeresses and hideous dresses of sisterhoods and 'Salvation Army' women. Let us study the ways of God's adornments, in flowers and fruits and plumages of birds, and be guided somewhat by the cultured taste of sculptors and

painters who have learnt the laws of beauty in form and harmony in colour.

What was at first an exhortation now comes with all the force of an argument. ‘Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?’ Luke supplies: ‘Neither be ye of doubtful mind.’ How the body should be pampered and adorned, was the great subject of thought and effort among heathens. ‘For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.’ They who were taught of God, and knew him as a heavenly Father, might rest in the belief that he was cognizant of every human need. ‘For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.’ A loftier ambition should be theirs; their chief object should be to live under the reign and rulership of God, and according to his laws of moral rectitude. ‘But seek ye first his kingdom (reign—Young), and his righteousness.’ Then every bodily want would certainly be supplied: ‘and all these things shall be added unto you.’ God deals his bounties with no niggard hand; and his children will be satisfied with the manner and measure in which he bestows them. They have no luxurious appetites to indulge; no love of pomp and display to gratify: there is ample satisfaction in the supply which answers to the want. ‘Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me.’

We must observe the conditions which Jesus attached to the assurance. Devote yourselves to the will of God, and live by his righteous laws: ‘added’ to that, incorporated with that, growing out of that, will be the satisfaction arising from the possession of the lesser bodily comforts. To those who neglect the duties laid upon them, Jesus’ promise does not apply. This brings us to the question, in what way are we to believe that the heavenly Father supplies his children’s wants? By the exercise of a general, or of a particular providence? By the opening of his hand, which filleth all things living with plenteousness, or by a special oversight which takes account of individual destinies, and flies to the succour of each particular person at the right moment? The latter plan is as easy and open to God as the former; ten thousand times ten thousand ministers, visible and invisible, wait his bidding, and in ways innumerable and unimaginable his will and influence may be exerted in human affairs. But of that, Jesus said nothing. He simply traces, as the humblest observer might, the open workings of divine providence, feeding the wild birds and beautifying the wild flowers. He hints at the fact that man possesses, in addition, skill and foresight which make him self-reliant, providing storehouses and barns; and he ends by tracing a connection between our moral conduct and the supply of our bodily necessities. No theory with respect to the scheme of divine providence can be correct, which does not take into account the effects arising out of man’s social relationships. We act and react upon each other, and the laws of Sociology are as much God’s laws as are any other laws regulating the universe. Each man is born to be of use to his fellows, to earn his bread by some kind of labour. The apostle Paul inculcated that fact by example and precept: ‘Neither did we eat bread for nought at any man’s hand, but in labour and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: not because we have not the right,



but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat.' That is God's law, and Christ's law, and the apostle's law—of Socialism, which has yet to be developed, insisted upon, and carried out by society. A certain amount of human labour is requisite for human sustenance and comfort. If a man has no occupation, manual or mental, he fails to render his contribution to the common stock : someone, somewhere, if not many everywhere, must be working to keep him in idleness. It is a mere verbal quibble to say that he does his part by providing 'capital : ' his wealth is, indeed, the means by which he escapes the performance of his duty of labour. A certain amount of work requires to be done in the world. The rough toil is constantly diminishing, by the application of machinery and of scientific discoveries generally ; and intellectual work is ever increasing, to provide an ampler supply of the conveniences, luxuries and refinements of existence. The idleness of one individual can be purchased only at the cost of throwing extra labour upon another and diminishing his leisure. The abject poverty of millions of manual labourers is a thing to shudder at ; the wages paid cannot provide sufficient for food, for decent lodging, for education, for self-respect. But it is the greed for gain causes that, you say,—the desire for large profits and huge fortunes. Why are they sought ? To make men independent of labour : that desire is the real source of the evil. The idleness of the upper classes contravenes the divine intention in two ways : directly, by banqueting at life's table without doing life's proper work : indirectly, by withholding from the toiling multitudes their fair share of life's comforts. But it is easier to thwart the divine appointment at the upper end of the social scale than at the lower end. For one who inherits a competency, there are thousands who must rely upon their own efforts. To earn a sufficiency, they must follow an active, honest career of industry ; many, if not most of us, can find no surer, loftier method than that, for carrying out in a practical form the precept : ' Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' They who do God's will, no matter in how humble a sphere of duty, promote his reign in the world : and to act with right intentions is to seek his righteousness. A life spent diligently and honourably rarely fails of success ; many of us bring upon ourselves anxiety and loss, by seeking or spending more than is needful ; many are defrauded of their due by injustice ; many are pressed down to the lowest ebb of vitality by the remorseless covetousness which makes any needful outlay for keeping inanimate machinery in order, but allows human machines to suffer and deteriorate to any extent decreed by the law of 'demand and supply : ' these are men's ways of thwarting God's plans for the sustenance and welfare of his children, and how little any special, individual providence interferes to prevent them and neutralize their terrible consequences, is attested by every groan which has proceeded, age after age, from the lips of the slave-driven and oppressed. It would seem that this promise of Jesus is rather to society than to the individual, as indicated by the use of 'you' instead of 'thou : ' 'YOUR heavenly Father knoweth that YE have need of all these things. But seek YE first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be

14 Rom. 7  
12 I. Cor. 26

added unto you.' Each one of us must live the social life, profit by social virtues, suffer through social crimes: 'None of us liveth to himself;' 'And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or *one* member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.' We can only secure earthly blessings by observing heavenly laws. Alford quotes on this subject 'a traditional saying of our Lord: Ask ye for great things, and small things shall be added unto you; ask for heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you.'

Knowing, therefore, that the supply of our necessities can be endangered only by our disregard of God's rule and righteousness, any anxiety about the morrow is misplaced. The history of to-morrow is already fixed, it being the result not so much of to-day's conduct as of the actions of many past days. We are ever reaping the fruits of seed sown long ago. Each day brings its own revelation: the success attendant upon past efforts, or the evil results of past errors of conduct and of judgment. It is our wisdom to recognize and deal with the evil of to-day; that is enough to occupy our minds, without anxious forecast respecting the immediate future, which it is now too late for us to mould or modify. 'Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

61 Mat. 34

25  
28  
31  
34

The Authorised Version stands: 'Take no thought for your life;' 'Why take ye thought for raiment?' 'Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? &c.' 'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.' That rendering was probably not too strong for the ideas conveyed, although a general misapprehension with respect to them led men to think so. The Revisers have introduced a modification by putting 'be not anxious' for 'take no thought.' Tischendorf does the same. That leads to the curious result, in verse 34, of representing 'the morrow' as being 'anxious.' Alford agrees with Tischendorf, but makes one exception, not venturing in verse 34 to put 'anxious' a second time, so that he translates the same word in one verse two ways: 'Take no anxious thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for itself;' and he adds the note: 'literally, for the morrow will care for it.' That in itself is a strong figure of speech, which it can hardly be right to make yet stronger by attributing to the morrow mental 'anxiety.' Young adopts throughout the word 'careful' in lieu of 'anxious.' The German version has the advantage of using one word, 'sorgen' to care, by adopting which we should obtain probably a better rendering: 'Care not for your life;' 'which of you by caring?' 'why care ye concerning raiment?' 'care not, saying . . .;' 'care not for the morrow;' 'the morrow will care for itself.' The Greek verb in the original is *merimnaō*, which is defined: 'to care for, be anxious about, think earnestly upon.' The word 'care' has an elasticity which seems to adapt itself to the full sense of the original; it brings out naturally and clearly the idea of the nature and quality of the food and clothing, an idea so generally missed, although conveyed by the word 'what:' 'Care not for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.' In verse 34 the Revisers have omitted the words 'for the things of' before the word 'itself,' on the authority of the two oldest MSS.

We have next to consider the warnings given by Jesus against passing judgments and condemnations. The position given by Luke to the exhortation serves to indicate its bearing. He puts the passage in connection with that relating to the loving of our enemies and the duty of imitating the mercifulness of our heavenly Father. 'And <sup>6 Luke 37</sup> judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye <sup>7 Mat. 1</sup> shall not be condemned.' Human destinies are moulded out of human actions. We can exercise or refrain from exercising upon our fellows our powers of offence and retaliation; we can make ourselves their censors, and as far as possible bring upon their heads the penalties attendant upon wrong-doing. But Jesus dissuades from this. Let not ours be the lips to judge and condemn, nor ours the hands to return evil for evil. Judgment is for judges, who are duly appointed and authorised either to acquit or condemn. Let none of us be a judge in our own quarrel, much less step out of our way to pass sentence in matters not involving our own interests. It is not to be supposed that Jesus is arguing in favour of the abolition of human tribunals of justice. His words 'judge not—condemn not,' must apply to private, unauthorised acts of retaliation and censure. Having fixed this sense, let us adhere to it, and not venture to incorporate with the text ideas of our own, which are probably at variance with its true sense. Jesus must be referring throughout to human judgments: he intimates that our acts have a reaction upon ourselves. It is by no means certain that any individual application of this truth was intended to be conveyed. The word 'ye' has a general, collective meaning, and may stand for society at large. The tone and manners of society are of our own making; all participate in their effects, and all bring a certain influence towards working out the results. Speaking of communities of men, this may be taken as a broad, philosophical truth: 'Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.' All the painful, miserable consequences arising out of the exercise of retaliation and censoriousness must die away, in proportion to the decline of the spirit which prompts such actions. Certainly the words of Jesus do not warrant the expectation, that if I do not judge and condemn some particular offence in another, then no man will judge or condemn me for the same or some other offence. That cannot be a right interpretation. Neither can it be correct to draw from the words this conclusion: If I do not judge or condemn evil in my neighbours, then God will not judge or condemn evils in me. If Jesus had meant that, he could have said it as plainly here as he had plainly said it with respect to forgiveness: 'If ye forgive men <sup>6 Mat. 14</sup> their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.' Every statement made by Jesus should be taken in its integrity. Alford admitted that in the words 'ye shall not be judged' we have 'the bare passive, without the agent expressed;' yet he takes upon himself to say: 'Judged, *i.e.* by God, for so doing; not by others.'

The meaning becomes clearer as we proceed. There is a law of reciprocity as well in what we do as in what we abstain from doing. 'Release, and ye shall be released.' A strict enforcement of our claims against others should not always be insisted upon, and a spirit of mutual forbearance is fostered whenever we abate something of our just due. To a still greater extent does an active benevolence



6 Luke 38 beget its like. 'Give and it shall be given unto you.' Let selfishness be once fairly conquered, and the virtue of liberality will abound.

„ 38 'Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom.' The nature of this simile makes it evident that the allusion is to the mutual dealings of men, and the Authorised Version has, 'shall *men* give into your bosom.' Alford anticipated the alteration introduced by the Revisers, when he said: '*Shall men give* (A. V.). Better, *shall they give*, leaving the persons uncertain.' But then he shrinks from the idea which naturally attaches to the words, and add: 'If we are to find a nominative, it should be the Angels, who are in this matter the ministers of the divine purposes.' We may take this as indicating that Alford had started a wrong interpretation, and to maintain it he was forced to insert ideas not in the original, first the words 'by God' after 'judged' and now the word 'Angels,' whom he supposes to be engaged in the task of repaying us, in some occult, unrecognized way, for our virtues. The words of Jesus from first to last, bear a very different construction.

„ 38 He closed by saying: 'For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.' Obviously this applies to human transactions; the level of the spirit whereby they are regulated is determined by the sum of individual actions; it rises or falls within certain fixed limits. Let each of us act in such a manner as will tend to raise the tone of society; let us free ourselves from hasty and harsh judgments, refrain from pressing our rights or powers unduly, throw aside selfish greed, and practise liberality: for in all social intercourse and mutual dealings men are ever gathering the fruits of seed sown by themselves.

Care and discrimination are required not only in order to apprehend the scope and import of these exhortations of Jesus, but also with respect to putting them into practice. At no single step in the course of investigation or of action, can the exercise of our own thought and intelligence be dispensed with. The clearest maxims and the loftiest philosophy cannot abolish private judgment and personal responsibility. The maxim 'judge not' must not degenerate into a tacit acquiescence with evil; 'condemn not,' must not interfere with a healthy censorship on behalf of morality and integrity; to 'release' men generally from obligations legally contracted would be offering a premium to recklessness and dishonesty; the habit of 'giving' indiscriminately has a tendency to raise up and perpetuate a class of lazy mendicants and helpless paupers. Considerations of this kind press upon our attention, and we must not venture to disregard them. God has placed us in a world which moves and changes, and we must needs shape our actions by the force of events and circumstances. If only we imbibe the spirit of these sublime teachings of Jesus, we shall escape extremes on either side. His aim was to elevate the tone of society, and it would be a poor homage to him and his cause to urge a slavish adherence to the letter of his precepts, to the stultifying of our own intelligence and the demoralization of others.

„ 39 At this point Luke introduces a parable. 'And he spake also a parable unto them.' The illustration was brief, but very telling.

„ 39 'Can the blind guide the blind?' The attempt would be absurd, the result disastrous.

„ 39 'Shall they not both fall into a pit?' This may



bear a close connection with what has gone before. Be the ignorance, the injustice, the selfishness, the faults of society what they may, there can be no hope of reformation without the introduction of a wholly different spirit. If we would lead men to better things, we must have a clearer vision than they, and loftier principles of action ; otherwise the very effort to impose our views and wills upon others will produce estrangement instead of confidence, and the result will be dissension and not reform. Only a high ideal of morality can elevate mankind. It is easy work to maintain the dull, dead level of conformity and uniformity. Men are content to take the spiritual nourishment provided by their teachers. 'The disciple is not above his master (or, teacher).' The pupil knows no other ideal than his instructor, and when the utmost has been taught and learned, he will have attained to the teacher's standard. 'But every one when he is perfected (completed—Tischendorf) shall be as his master (or, teacher).' Most important, therefore, is it, that all who aspire to teach should be competent for so high and important a function. The foremost requisite is to feel one's own deficiencies, to possess and exercise the power of introspection. This is illustrated by a very striking comparison. 'And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?' The metaphor is of the strongest kind : a 'mote,' a tiny particle, an atom that might float in the sunshine ; and a 'beam,' a large block of wood, impossible to overlook and not easy to move. Jesus deliberately chose an exaggerated symbol. The Greek words are *karp̄os* : 'any dry particle ; a dry stalk or chip' ; and *dokos* : 'a wooden beam or bar : a shaft.' Luther toned down the simile by rendering the words 'Splitter' and 'Balken,' 'splinter' and 'beam.' Samuel Sharpe translates them 'chaff' and 'splinter.' In either case there is a vast difference between the two things, but which is not too great to illustrate the blindness of the egotist to his own faults, and the unreliability of his criticisms on the faults of others. How utterly unfitted are such characters for their self-imposed office of critics and guides ! 'Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?' Let such teachers first teach themselves, become conscious of the hypocrisy attaching to their self-esteem and censoriousness, and free themselves from their own vices and imperfections. Then their mental and spiritual vision may be sufficiently purged to enable them to undertake the delicate and difficult office of teaching, improving and perfecting others. 'Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.'

The last two verses in Luke are given in nearly the same words by Matthew, who here introduces some observations of Jesus which do not appear to have any connection with the context. 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.' There can be no justification for the idea that this alludes to any instruction we can give to our fellow men : first, because no teachings of ours would be described as 'holy,' or as 'pearls,' and, secondly, because we may not venture to consider others as 'dogs' and 'swine.' The term 'holy' applies to whatever belongs to the service

of God; 'pearls' are ornaments not made or shaped by man, yet valued as personal adornments. We should look upon our own bodies as 'holy,' dedicated to God, together with whatever of physical and mental beauty he may have endowed us with. Lying in wait for the degradation of body and mind are those eager, hungry, vicious passions which may fitly be compared to 'dogs' and 'swine.' Beware we of yielding to them; they will devour with insatiate appetite what properly belongs to sacred affections; they will trample into the mire with filthy feet the glory of manhood and the charm of womanhood; and when all that is pure and lovely has been misused and defiled, and failed to satisfy, there will come the heart-rendings of remorse. The evangelist not having recorded any special application made by Jesus himself of this parable, we are free to apply it, subject to its natural limitations, in this or other ways; but that interpretation must be the truest which takes in every point of the simile.

Jesus next dwells upon the connection existing between effort and attainment. 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' Such powers as we possess must be brought into action; such opportunities as present themselves must be embraced. Some things depend entirely upon the will of another, from whom they must needs be asked; things lost or strayed must be looked for carefully and in likely places; a closed door must be knocked at by him who would enter. And the effort must be consistent with the object: no search or knocking will give us that which is in the disposal of another; no asking or knocking will find a thing lost on the highway; no asking or searching will open a door which must be knocked at boldly to arouse the inmates of the house. Whatever is desired must be sought and gained in the natural and proper way. 'For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.'

Taking the case of 'asking,' Jesus points out that there must be the assurance of a reliable sympathy on the part of the donor towards the recipient. Strangers may not ask from strangers; a relationship of some kind must justify the asking, and then the goodwill of the possessor will respond to the need of the asker. 'Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent?' The child feels sure of the father's willingness to give, and the love of the father meets the requirement of the child. And if this is so between man and man, how much more between God and man! 'If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' The conclusion Jesus draws from this is very remarkable. We might have expected him to say, All good things therefore whatsoever ye need, ask them of your Father which is in heaven, and he will give them; but instead of that, he says: 'All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.' The attainment of God's 'good things' can be realized only by the mutual fulfilment of human obligations. That is the divinely-appointed method whereby we must 'ask,' 'seek' and 'knock,' in order to 'receive,' 'find,' and have God's good things

'opened' to us. The object in the mind of Jesus was the welfare of society, not of particular individuals; not the benefit of a few, but the well-being of all. That can never be brought about unless his golden rule is acted upon: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.' Of all the good things which men can desire, long and pray for, does a single one ever come to us direct from God, without human intervention? No thunderbolts leap from the sky to save the innocent from the guilty; no bread falls from heaven into the hovels of the starving poor; no sudden illumination from above dissipates the ignorance and degradation of the uneducated. Society is a living organism, no one member of which can be benefited unless through some other member, and the health of the entire organism depends upon the way in which each member performs its proper functions. That all men may have the good they ask, seek and clamour for, it is essential that each should deal with others as he would have others deal with him. Selfishness may secure the well-being of a class, but not of a community; and individual interests must suffer, and be sacrificed, until the community is purged from selfishness. That is the sum and substance, the aim and end of the divine will and revelation: 'All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.'

That the customary career of life was neither right nor safe, Jesus illustrated by a parable. 'Enter ye in by the narrow gate.' That 7 Mat. 13 betokens the least frequented road, not used for general traffic, a route less attractive to most men than the broad highway. The general preference for the latter may or may not be attributable to motives of ease, convenience or companionship, but the two roads are represented as leading to different places, to which Jesus gives figurative names, Destruction and Life. 'For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby.' ,, 13 Not without reason had Jesus been giving counsel after counsel, each one of them in direct opposition to the prevalent opinions and habits of mankind; for he discerned in the constitution of society, in its selfishness and censoriousness, its low tone of morality, and the mere earthliness of its aims, the elements of division, disintegration and destruction. It was imperative that a better way of life should be made known to the multitude, recognized by all, and followed generally. That was the object of this sermon on the Mount, the precepts given in which laid a foundation for the regeneration and salvation of society. As yet Jesus could only utter the sigh: 'How narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it.' Have eighteen centuries of 'Christian' teaching broadened the gate, enlarged the way, augmented the travellers?

Recognizing the fact that the course of men's lives is to a great extent determined by the character of the teaching imparted to them, Jesus counselled his hearers to be on their guard against false teachers. 'Beware of false prophets.' In the history of Israel the number of false prophets had often far exceeded the true, and Jesus had found it necessary to oppose in many points the teaching of the spiritual guides who, in his day, led and misled the people. There were no outward indications of deception to put men on their guard: the false teachers were seen to be clothed in the garb of orthodoxy,

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7 Mat. 15 but the emoluments of office were their chief concern, for Jesus added : ' which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.' The worthless characters of such men could be detected from their utter lack of profitable influence ; there was no real, desirable nourishment in all their teaching ; they were as barren and unproductive as the thorn bushes and thistles by the wayside.

.. 16 ' By their fruits ye shall know them. Do *men* gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? ' In Luke this is put more fully, and is rendered by Young : ' For off thorns men do not gather figs ; nor off a bramble bush do they harvest grapes.'

6 Luke 44

Jesus now changes and broadens the illustration. Putting aside all question as to the motives of the teachers, the fact remains, that what they can impart must depend upon and accord with their own character and capacities. The simile chosen is that of a tree, which can only yield fruit according to its nature. Long and wise culture may have developed admirable saplings, or long neglect may have produced degeneracy ; and the tree must be classed accordingly as

7 Mat. 17, 18 ' good ' or ' corrupt,' and its yield will answer to its class. ' Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' Luke adds : ' For each tree is known by its own fruit.'

6 Luke 44

Carrying the illustration further, Jesus indicated the natural end of a worthless tree. ' Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' Tischendorf renders ' hewn down ' by ' cut out.' There are ever at work powers of observation, superintendence, selection, whereby, after a period of trial, that which is corrupt and useless is eliminated, leaving room for the natural development of that which is good and profitable. Jesus does not hint at any special, supernatural interference, and it is not for us to introduce ideas which are not conveyed by his words. His

.. 20 closing remark : ' Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them,' seems rather to be the laying down of an infallible rule of judgment for the guidance of society in the task of extirpating the evils growing up in its midst.

7 Mat. 19

Immediately after the parable of the good and bad tree and fruit, Luke inserts another illustration : ' The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good ; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* bringeth forth that which is evil.' The distinction between good and bad fruit was simply one of quality and quantity ; the tree might be almost or altogether barren, or it might yield a fruit unfit for food : the fig tree is contrasted with the thorn, the grape vine with the bramble bush. We may take the same view of the good and bad treasure stored up in the hearts of good and bad men. The better the man, the better the treasure ; the worse the man, the worse the treasure. As the bad fruit is not absolutely poisonous, so the evil in and issuing from a man's heart may not be absolutely contaminating, mephitic. There are degrees in good and evil, as in everything else. A ' treasure ' signifies here an accumulation ; the more carefully our hidden store is selected, sifted, purged, the better for ourselves and others. Too often the mass is heterogeneous and trashy ; sometimes it may be a blending of mere vanity and noxiousness. But whatever it may be, out it must come, whether to the profit or detriment, the

6 Luke 45



pleasure or disgust of those within our range of utterance. The conversation of every man has its distinctive peculiarity: a moral tone, an intellectual tinge, a subtle odour of individuality, dependent on the qualities and attributes of his mental and spiritual possessions. 'For out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh.' 6 Luke 45

Not all who had enrolled themselves as disciples of Jesus were disposed to put his precepts into practice. But he argued against the inconsistency of a merely nominal adherence to him, and asked why they should profess submission to him as their Teacher, and then fail to conform their lives to his instructions. 'And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' No mere profession of discipleship could accomplish the declared purpose of his teaching, which was the introduction of men into a higher state, the placing of them under a heavenly rulership. 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.' 7 Mat. 21 The indispensable qualification for admission thereto is obedience to the divine laws of heaven: 'but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' The test by which Jesus will eventually acknowledge his disciples is that of moral character. When that day of trial comes, many will address him as Lord, or Master, will base their claim for admission to his presence on the fact that they, as by his power and under his authority, have taught his doctrines, exorcised demons and performed prodigies. 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and by thy name cast out devils (Gr. demons), and by thy name do many mighty works (Gr. powers)?' 21 In vain all that, apart from moral rectitude, without which there can have been no fellowship with Jesus. He will have none about him whose lives are stained by wrong-doing. 'And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' 22

How exalted this teaching! How august the Teacher! He speaks of himself as appointed to exercise a permanent control over human destinies; as holding a position, a rank, a pre-eminence, unquestioned and unassailable. We know that nothing of all this came to pass during his life on earth. But he had been telling his disciples of a heavenly existence and a heavenly reward; the period of which he is now speaking is described merely as 'that day;' how far it might be in the distant future none could tell, but to his mind's eye it stood out clear and distinct, and he was able to picture it with all the vividness of a scene actually present.

To bring home to his hearers the necessity of obedience, and the folly of merely listening to his precepts, Jesus closed his sermon by a parable. 'Every one therefore that cometh unto me, and heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like. He shall be likened unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.' 24 The good judgment shown in selecting this firm foundation was continued during the building, no pains being spared in digging deep down into the hard rock. 'He is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock.' 6 Luke 47 All this precaution, care and labour were justified by the result. There came a season of storm and flood: the winds raged against the walls, and the swollen river surged round the base, but the building defied alike the gale and the flood. 'And the rain' 48 7 Mat. 25

descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.' Luke's record omits mention of the rain and wind, and dwells only on the strength of the torrent. 'And when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house.' Tischendorf renders: 'And when an inundation came, the river beat vehemently upon that house.' But from the foundation upwards there was no weak point in the edifice, and it remained firm as the rock on which it stood amidst the seething waters: 'and could not shake it: because it had been well builded.' The last six words are introduced by the Revisers from the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., the less ancient authorities having taken instead Matthew's words, 'for it hath been founded upon the rock.'

6 Luke 48  
7 Mat. 26  
6 Luke 49  
7 Mat. 27  
6 Luke 49  
7 Mat. 27  
6 Luke 49

'And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.' Here also Luke is somewhat different. 'But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation.' Matthew then repeats the expression, 'And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house.' Luke repeats: 'against which the stream brake.' There was no power of resistance in the building, which became an utter ruin: 'and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.' Luke describes it as quickly falling in upon itself, the lapping waters constantly increasing the overthrow: 'And straightway it fell together; and the ruin of that house became great.'

The parable is of universal application: 'EVERY ONE which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them . . . . EVERY ONE that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not.' It is a life and death question for each of us: Am I building wisely, on the rock of effort and self-abnegation? or foolishly, on the sand of ease and self-indulgence? digging and deepening daily towards the only sure foundation? or building 'a house upon the earth without a foundation?' The flood is sure to come, be it water or fire, death or judgment, and nothing will stand at the last except the life which has been moulded to the pattern of these precepts of Jesus.

When Jesus had finished his sermon, there was a general outburst of astonishment. His teaching had a tone of power and certainty, which was altogether lacking from the discourses they were accustomed to hear. 'And it came to pass, when Jesus ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.' Probably not one among his hearers knew as much as we know, if anything whatever, concerning his birth, and the miracles and prophecies attending it. Thirty years had passed since then. The startling family records of Mary and Joseph, of Zacharias and Elisabeth, had not been published abroad. Old Simeon and Anna the prophetess, had passed to their rest a generation ago. What had become of the shepherds who heard the sweet carol of the angels? of the Magi, who had worshipped the babe? Men's minds had been occupied with other things than these; they were not of a kind to be sought out and recorded by historians. The origin of the new Teacher must have been, to most persons, wrapped in obscurity: the biographies of great men are never written until they have become famous. But we, with the biography of Jesus in our hands, and this his marvellous sermon on the Mount fresh in

our minds, can discern the way in which he had set himself to fulfil the prophecy of the angel concerning him : 'It is he that shall save his people from their sins.' The loftiest philosophy of man has never attained to the height, depth and breadth of the wisdom concentrated in this sermon on the Mount. Could any mere earthly Teacher have discoursed as Jesus did of heavenly things, or have conceived and uttered such beatitudes for human hopes and aspirations? No supremacy of intellectual and spiritual endowments could generate these sublime ideas : they are based upon a superhuman knowledge of man's nature and final destiny ; they are the outcome of a mind which could pierce the mysteries of life, death, the future state, and frame a code of morality, and prescribe a course of conduct, suited to the exigencies of our moral being, and certain to be justified by the ultimate, though as yet unseen, issues of events.

On the conclusion of the sermon the congregation did not disperse, but a large number followed Jesus. 'And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.' He at once entered the town of Capernaum. 'After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum.' Whilst there a message came to him from a Roman soldier. This man had a slave whom he held in much esteem, who was ill, almost dying. 'And a certain centurion's servant (Gr. bondservant), who was dear unto him (or, precious to him, or, honourable with him), was sick and at the point of death.' Matthew describes the servant as a 'boy,' and states that he was unable to rise and was suffering excruciating agony from an attack of palsy. 'And when he was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant (or, boy) lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.' Luke states that the centurion did not make the request in person, but that having heard about the miracles performed by Jesus, he sought the mediation of certain Jews of reputation, who undertook the task of pleading on his behalf. 'And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant (Gr. bondservant).' They not only took the message from the centurion, but also added their entreaties to his. They dilated upon the worthiness of their friend's character, declared him to be a lover of their nation, and explained that to his liberality they were indebted for the gift of their synagogue. 'And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him : for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue.' Jesus acceded to the request : 'And Jesus went with them.' Matthew gives the words of acquiescence, as though they had been addressed to the centurion direct. 'And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him ;' and then he adds, as if the centurion had replied in person : 'And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy (Gr. sufficient) that thou shouldest come under my roof.' But Luke relates the matter fully, and explains that when Jesus had come within a short distance of the house, the centurion again sent out friends to meet him, and to deliver the message. 'And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself.' Young renders the word 'Lord' as 'Sir :' there is no reason for supposing that it signified more than the

1 Mat. 21

8 Mat. 1

7 Luke 1

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8 Mat. 5, 6

7 Luke 3

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8 Mat. 7

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7 Luke 6



respectful deference paid by one man to another, who might be either an equal or a superior. It seems to be equivalent to the German word 'Herr,' which has an elasticity of meaning covering our two words 'Sir' and 'Lord.' The centurion explained the motives which had led him to refrain from coming personally to Jesus, and which made him anxious that Jesus should not enter his house. 'For I am not worthy (Gr. sufficient) that thou shouldest come under my roof : wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee.' These reasons become sufficiently explicable when we take into account Jewish habits and prejudices. When the apostle Peter, long afterwards, paid a visit to another Roman centurion, he acknowledged that in so doing he was transgressing Jewish customs and ordinances : 'Ye yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation.' In seeking help from Jesus, the centurion must have felt that he was asking something which would expose the great Jewish Teacher to adverse criticism ; the centurion's love for the nation tended to make him the more careful not to run counter to their principles ; he seems also to have been conscious of their superiority over Gentiles, and of insufficiency, inferiority, in himself as compared with them. When he learnt that the entreaties of his friends had prevailed, and that the Teacher was on the road to visit him, he became so anxious that Jesus should not enter his house that he sent other friends begging him not to take that trouble for one so unworthy as himself. We know the amiable character of the man : the breadth of view which led him to appreciate the Jews ; the liberality which induced him to build them a synagogue ; the compassion of his heart towards his young slave ; and remembering all this, we can understand his anxiety to ward off from his Benefactor the reproaches which might be cast upon him for entering the abode of a Gentile. Peter needed a special revelation to teach him that he 'should not call any man common or unclean.' Not so Jesus. He had not scrupled to stretch forth his hand to a leper, the touch involving ceremonial defilement. Now he is ready, unhesitatingly to enter a Gentile dwelling. For his own sake, in proportion to his willingness to come, was the anxiety of the centurion to keep him away. Surely it could not be absolutely necessary for Jesus to be in the presence of the sick person in order to effect a cure : 'but only say the word (Gr. with a word), and my servant (or, boy) shall be healed.' The centurion must have been persuaded that the occult power of Jesus could act as well at a distance as at hand ; probably that he had at command invisible agents waiting to do his bidding. The world was ruled by delegated powers, and the higher in authority a man stood, the greater in number were the vassals ready to carry out his behests. 'For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers : and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant (Gr. bondservant), Do this, and he doeth it.' Obviously the mind of the centurion was of no common order. He had looked with an unbiased eye on the character and religion of the Jews, and did not suffer his nationality to prevent him from loving their nation and reverencing their creed. But it was something else in the man which attracted the attention and excited the astonishment of Jesus. Such an implicit confidence in his power he had never yet met with, even

7 Luke 6, 7

10 Acts 28

,, 28

5 Luke 13

8 Mat. 8

7 Luke 8



on the part of his own countrymen. So struck was he by this exhibition of faith, that he turned round, addressed the multitude, and pronounced a eulogy upon it. 'And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.' And he would have them regard this as a typical contrast between Jew and Gentile. It would hold good in many other instances. Heathens from different quarters of the earth would be recognized as worthy of the friendly companionship of the patriarchal Jews held most in honour, whilst those who claimed the same position by right of birth would find themselves excluded from the festive brightness of their proper home, and thrust outside into comfortless gloom, there to bewail in bitter anguish their folly and their loss. 'And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down (Gr. recline) with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven : but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Here is a development, an authoritative interpretation, of certain ideas included in the term 'kingdom of heaven,' which had been proclaimed as at hand since the days of John the Baptist. It would be a gathering together of the good and worthy of all ages and countries, and a separation from their midst of the unworthy.

Luke briefly records the result of the centurion's application : 'And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant (Gr. bondservant) whole.' The Revisers omit, on the authority of the two oldest MSS., the words, 'that had been sick.' Matthew states that Jesus addressed the centurion : 'And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way, as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant (or, boy) was healed in that hour.' There is an apparent discrepancy between the two accounts : that of Matthew would obviously lead to the conclusion that the centurion went in person to Jesus, received the answer, and at once, by word of mouth, dissuaded Jesus from coming to his house. Luke says that the centurion did not go to Jesus, but sent friends, and also explained why he had not gone in person. Very little is wanted, probably merely the introduction of some circumstance omitted by Matthew, to reconcile the narratives. Such discrepancies are common to all histories. Possibly Matthew was not present, and only received at second hand the salient points relating to the miracle ; possibly the centurion sent friends first, and after some delay came himself. The apparent divergencies between Matthew and Luke give rise to the question whether the event recorded by John, and which has been taken as happening at an earlier period, may not, perhaps, be another version, more or less distorted, of the same occurrence. There are certain points of resemblance : a nobleman or 'King's officer' went to Jesus on behalf of a person sick at Capernaum ; Jesus did not go to him, but gave the assurance that his life was safe. The applicant believed, and the recovery was simultaneous with the saying of Jesus. But, on the other hand, there are differences which forbid the supposition of the events being identical : the sick person was a 'son,' not a 'bondservant ;' Jesus seems to have chidden the applicant's want of faith, instead of extolling his faith ; and there was an earnest request

for the presence of Jesus, 'Come down ere my child die,' instead of a desire to prevent his going.

The event next recorded by Luke happened, according to the Authorised Version, on 'the day after,' which the Revisers have altered to 'soon afterwards,' adding the note: 'Many ancient authorities read *on the next day*.' The Tauchnitz edition gives no indication of the reading adopted by the Revisers, as existing in either of the three oldest MSS., and Tischendorf has retained the expression, 'the day after.' Jesus went to Nain, 'a town of Galilee not far from Capernaum, a few miles to the south of Mount Tabor' (Alford). He was followed thither by his disciples and a great concourse of people.

7 Luke 11 'And it came to pass soon afterwards that he went to a city called Nain; and his disciples went unto him, and a great multitude.' On approaching the city gate they encountered a funeral procession: a corpse was being borne outside the walls; a widow followed it, chief mourner for her only son, and many of her townsmen showed their

„ 12 sympathy by accompanying her. 'Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.' The heart of Jesus swelled with compassion as he looked on the bereaved mother in her grief. He spoke to her,

„ 12 two words only: 'Weep not:' kindly meant, but by themselves how

„ 13 powerless to stay that flood of sorrow! 'And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.' But he had a serious purpose in thus addressing the sobbing mother. He approached and touched the bier; and there was that in his action

„ 14 and attitude which constrained the bearers to halt. 'And he came nigh, and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still.' The solemn

„ 14 hush of expectation was broken by the voice of Jesus. 'And he said, Young man' . . . What! the living speaking to the dead? Yes:

„ 14 words of life-giving power: 'I say unto thee, Arise.' That word pierced the deaf ears, and woke within the corpse the slumbering spirit which had breathed its last. The power of motion was restored to the stiffened limbs: the faculty of utterance to the palsied tongue.

„ 15 'And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.' Then the Saviour took by the hand the Saved, and led him to the bewildered,

„ 15 astounded, grateful mother. 'And he gave him to his mother.'

Never since the creation of the world had there been a scene like that. The band of mourners could mingle now with the crowd which had followed Jesus to their city, and full of wonder and of

„ 16 awe must have been the comments of the onlookers. 'And fear took hold on all.' The worker of the miracle stood among them, calm and unassuming, careful only that the enthusiasm which might otherwise have taken the form of a popular ovation to himself, should be directed into its proper channel. Wise and sober were the conclusions

„ 16 at which the multitude, discussing the miracle, arrived. 'And they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited his people.' In their minds, the power was of God, through Jesus, and to God alone they gave the glory. And in that

„ 17 light Jesus was thenceforth regarded throughout the country: 'And this report went forth concerning him in the whole of Judea, and all the region round about.'

Yet never before had a prophet, from Moses downwards, worked a

miracle in such a way. Trench quotes the following passage from Massillon's sermons : 'Elie ressuscite des morts, c'est vrai ; mais il est obligé de se coucher plusieurs fois sur le corps de l'enfant qu'il ressuscite : il souffle, il se rétrécit, il s'agite : on voit bien qu'il invoque une puissance étrangère ; qu'il rappelle de l'empire de la mort une âme qui n'est pas soumise à sa voix ; et qu'il n'est pas lui-même le maître de la mort et de la vie. Jésus-Christ ressuscite les morts comme il fait les actions les plus communes : il parle en maître à ceux qui dorment d'un sommeil éternel : et l'on sent bien qu'il est le Dieu des morts comme des vivans,—jamais plus tranquille que lorsqu'il opère les plus grandes choses.' Let the majestic supremacy of Jesus be admitted to the full ; let the fact be recognised that he was 'much more than a prophet' : that might well be, for he said as much of John the Baptist ; but, on the other hand, let us be on our guard against the crude conceptions and erroneous deductions of preachers and commentators. They assume that a miracle like this attests the 'divinity' of Jesus. That is true, in the true sense, but false in the false sense of the word 'divinity.' They restrict the title 'God' to the one SUPREME GOD ; and therefore when Jesus is spoken of as 'God,' they assume him to be one with, if not identical with the one SUPREME GOD. From this misconception springs whatever is erroneous in the doctrine of the Trinity. Men are bound to accept the Scriptural assertions that Jesus is 'God,' and that the Holy Spirit is 'God,' and that 'to us *there is but one God*': and the effort to reconcile these truths has produced the 'Creed of St. Athanasius.' He seems to have built honestly, sturdily, solidly—on a wrong foundation. That is why his building stands awry, to the perplexity of believers, and the derision of unbelievers. Persuaded of the true inspiration of the Scriptures, he bent language and logic into a shape designed in every point to coincide with them, all unconscious of the primal flaw in his reasonings arising from the misapplication of the single, all-important word—God. It is important to obtain clear views on this question. Taking the Scriptural passages bearing on it, in connection with their context, does Paul really assert that there is only one Being to whom the title of 'God' is, or can be, properly applied ? 'We know that no idol is *anything* in the world, and that there is no God but one.' We may either drop or retain the inserted word 'anything': the sense of the passage is, that no idol has anything to do with the rulership of the world, any existence in the constitution and order of nature : 'no idol is in the world,' over which there is but one God or Ruler. There are, indeed, many to whom the term 'God' is applied, and rightly, for there are many gods, many lords, exercising their sway under limitations ; but we look above and beyond all to one Ruler and Father, and to one Lord, Jesus Christ. 'For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth ; as there are gods many, and lords many ; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him ; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.' The word 'God' is not a mere distinguishing name, but a title denoting rulership ; it is synonymous with 'King': there are many kings, but to us of a particular nation, one king. This interpretation of the term 'God' is borne out by the use of the word throughout the Scriptures ; and it explains what otherwise would be mysterious

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and incomprehensible. Take the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. God has spoken to us by a Son, who is superior to all prophets, 'the effulgence of his glory, the impress of his substance,' the upholder of all things, seated on the right hand of majesty, the inheritor of a more excellent name than the angels; and of the Son it is said:

'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever . . .

God, thy God, hath anointed thee

With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'

Take the word 'God' in its natural, proper, Scriptural sense of 'Ruler,' and all is plain: God's son is a God; God is a God to his son. But if you restrict the application of the term 'God' to the One All-supreme Ruler, these passages become incomprehensible, and all the dogmatic assertions and refined subtleties of the Athanasian Creed will not suffice to elucidate the mystery of God the Son in conjunction with God the Father, or obviate the absurdity attaching to the belief that 'the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods but one God.' On the other hand, if you give to the words 'God' and 'Godhead' in the Athanasian Creed the sense of 'Ruler' and 'Rulership,' you have a statement which is comprehensible, although expressed with insufficient clearness and with needless prolixity. Let us not wrong Athanasius, but see, as far as his words enable us, what doctrine he intended to propound. In the forefront of the 'Catholick Faith' he places this: 'That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.' Does that mean, one Ruler in three persons, and three persons in union? Undoubtedly three persons, for 'there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.' Next: 'But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one.' Does that mean that the Rulership of the three Persons is a combined Rulership? That would be intelligible, reasonable, Scriptural. But then how shall we understand the statement that each of the three Persons is uncreated, incomprehensible (illimitable?) and eternal, 'And yet they are not three eternal: but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated: but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible?' What definition can be given of the word 'Person,' which will suffice to make such a self-evident contradiction good logic? 'Personality' or 'individuality' will not suit: no word presents itself as capable of bridging over the absurdity, and landing us on the firm ground of common sense and right reasoning. Other verbal inconsistencies may be surmounted. Three Persons each almighty, but together only making one Almighty; three Persons, each God and Lord, yet together only one God and Lord: this may be taken to signify the conjoint exercise of a threefold power and rulership, in one undivided, unclashing sway and government. It comes to this: Where other words can be used, or ideas which are not expressed can be inserted, these parts of the creed become intelligible; but where that cannot be done, they stand out obscure, enigmatical, mysterious, a mass of high-sounding contradictions and illogicalities. Regarding the whole creed as a mere specimen of literary composition, it is a marvellous production of human genius, and when sung to its magnificent music it forms a very imposing addition to the Church Service. But the



spirit of the creed, from first to last, is anything but the spirit embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Take as an illustration one passage only: 'He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity.' Where can there be found the slightest Scriptural authority for such an assertion? Who was Athanasius, that he should impose conditions of salvation which were not imposed by our Lord and Saviour? Who are they, who would have us accept as gospel truths his dogmatic axioms, and profess ourselves, with him, to be conversant with inscrutable mysteries connected with the nature and existence of God Himself? How many persons, in an ordinary congregation, repeating the Athanasian Creed, would be able to indicate the exact position of their own hearts, or give an accurate scientific explanation of the heart's pulsations? Yet they are taught to define the mode and manner of the Divine existence, and pronounce condemnation on those who do not think accordingly!

The man who, above all others, was most interested in the career of Jesus, was not permitted to watch its marvellous development. John the Baptist was condemned to languish in captivity; but news from the outside world penetrated within the prison walls, and his disciples brought to him reports of the marvellous works and words of Jesus. 'And the disciples of John told him all these things.' <sup>7 Luke 18</sup> Unable to see and hear for himself, or to hold personal intercourse with Jesus, John decided to send to him a special message. 'Now <sup>11 Mat. 2</sup> when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples.' He selected two of them, charging them to deliver a particular question. 'And John calling unto him two (Gr. certain <sup>7 Luke 19</sup> two) of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?' The messengers fulfilled their mission to the letter. 'And when the men were come unto him, <sup>20</sup> they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?' The question was peculiar, especially when taken in connection with the circumstances. John had been the herald of Jesus, had declared himself unworthy even to lace the shoe of one so great, had received a miraculous attestation that Jesus was the Son of God, and had declared of him, 'He must <sup>3 John 20</sup> increase, but I must decrease.' It would therefore be unreasonable to assume that any doubt could now exist in the mind of John with respect to the pre-eminence of Jesus. That would have been to falsify his own predictions, to declare his own ministry a mistake, his own inspiration a delusion. Moreover, the question was suggested to the Baptist by the accounts he had received of the miracles wrought by Jesus. They were the cause of wonder, if not of faith, to others: how could they prove to John motives for doubt or unbelief? The supernatural gifts of Jesus were now made evident; he was excelling all the prophets of old by his teaching and powers of healing. But where was the fruit? What was to be the end of all this? In what way were the aspirations of the Jewish nation to be satisfied? What were the plans of Jesus for manifesting himself as the Messiah? The work in which he was engaged, however marvellous and beneficent, seemed unlikely to produce any national or substantial result. Jesus was manifesting himself as the Benefactor, but not as the Head of his people. His Sermon on the Mount disclosed conditions of

blessedness not realizable on earth, and precepts tending to the regeneration of society by the slow process of individual amendment and the reversal of current maxims and ambitions. But there was no rallying cry to the nation, no settled purpose discernible, no course of action entered upon likely to enlist the sympathies and satisfy the aspirations of the Jewish people. The message of the Baptist seems designed to call attention to this condition of expectation, uncertainty, and apparent immobility. It was like asking a recognized leader, Are you our Captain, or must we look for another to lead us to victory? There was something in the attitude and procedure of Jesus which John could not understand. How was the great work of national deliverance to be accomplished? Would Jesus carry it through, or must the nation fix its hopes upon some one else? 'Art thou the coming One, or must we look for another?' (Tischendorf). There was something approaching to expostulation, something akin to reproach, something resembling advice, in that very suggestive question. Jesus recognized its full import, and answered it in a very striking and decisive way. He allowed the two disciples of John to look on while he performed his customary miracles; they saw him effect cures of various kinds, and restore sight to many who were blind. 'In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues (Gr. scourges) and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight.' And other great works were reported to them: how the lame were made to walk, and hearing was restored to the deaf, and even the dead were called back to life. And besides this, they learnt somewhat of the hold he had gained over those who were lowest in the social scale, by his soul-stirring and comforting discourses. All this he bade the messengers repeat to John. 'And he answered and said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings (or, the gospel) preached to them.' He would answer John by deeds instead of words. These things constituted the deliberately-chosen life-work of Jesus. It might not commend itself to the world; it might not respond to the prevalent ideas respecting the office of Messiah; it might satisfy few, and give offence to many: but not for all that, would Jesus change his course of action. Happy they who could appreciate instead of criticising it, and who were not kept back from Jesus by prejudices and misconceptions. 'And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me.'

With this message the disciples of John returned, and forthwith Jesus began to speak about him to the multitude. 'And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John . . .' It would seem that the reply to John's disciples was given in public, for Matthew intimates that it was while they were in the act of passing out of the crowd that Jesus began to speak of their Master. 'And as these went their way, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John.' Young renders, 'And as they were going.' We may assume, therefore, that the crowd of listeners knew of the enquiry made by the Baptist, and had heard the answer given by Jesus, the closing words of which, 'happy is he whoever may not be stumbled at me' (Young), indicated that John

7 Luke 21

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11 Mat. 7

considered something to be lacking in the career of Jesus. The appeal which he now makes to the hearers must be considered in connection with this fact. 'What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind?' That might be seen anywhere; but the Baptist was no 'reed,' nor could they wonder that he had stood firm and strong in doctrine and opinion, and had taken upon himself to call upon Jesus for a more outspoken declaration of his Messiahship, if not for a more decided course of action. Had they, then, visited the desert in search of some richly-apparelled man? That idea was equally wide of the mark: pomp and luxury were to be found in palaces, not in the wilderness. 'But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.' John, stern in teaching, fearless in criticism, rugged in his garb of camel's hair and leather, abstemious in his food of locusts and wild honey, was the very reverse of all this. Dismissing false conceptions of his character, what had they expected to find him, and what had he really proved to be? 'But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.' For John had come as a special herald, to pave the way for one greater than himself, the Lord of the temple, the Messenger of the covenant, the Refiner and Purifier foretold by Malachi.

3 Mal. 1-3

'This is he of whom it is written,

7 Luke 2

Behold I send my messenger before thy face,

Who shall prepare thy way before thee.'

The words in Malachi stand thus: 'Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.' The quotation differs, by the insertion of the words 'before thy face,' by putting 'the way' for 'thy way,' and 'thee' for 'me.' The idea of this being an error of the evangelist is obviated by the fact that Matthew, Mark and Luke agree. The inference drawn by Alford from the discrepancy is as follows: 'Our Lord here changes the person of the original prophecy, which is *my*. And that he does so, making that which is said by Jehovah of Himself, to be addressed to the Messiah, is, if such were needed, no mean indication of His own eternal and co-equal Godhead. It is worthy of remark that all three Evangelists quote this prophecy *similarly changed*, although St. Mark has it in an entirely different place.' Alford's argument rests upon two assumptions: (1) That Jesus changed the words of the prophecy; (2) that the three evangelists changed them in deference to him. Admitting that Matthew and Luke quoted the recorded words of Jesus, and not the original prophecy, there is no warrant for assuming that Mark did so. He made this passage the beginning of the gospel, and according to the two oldest MSS., he attributed it to Isaiah, where it is not found. This appearing to be an error, it seems to have been altered at an early date, 'the prophets' being inserted, as in the Authorised Version, instead of 'Isaiah.' If it was an error of Mark, that indicates the ease with which misquotations could creep in. If it was not an error, the fact may be accounted for by supposing that the passage really existed in a portion of Isaiah which has not been handed down to us. In that case, Jesus also may have quoted from Isaiah. There is not the shadow of a reason for assuming that Mark based the quotation on the rendering of Jesus; on the contrary, he



1 Mark 2

says distinctly, 'Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet.' Surely he must have seen some MS., whether of Isaiah or Malachi, from which he copied the words. And Jesus himself professed to be simply quoting: 'This is he of whom it is written . . .' We know that varieties of readings abound in MSS. of the New Testament. It is reasonable to suppose that to have been the case in those days with the Old Testament.

11 Mat. 11

3 Mat. 2

11 Mat. 11

Never had there arisen a greater character, or one who exercised so high a function. 'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.' Yet there was something to which he had not attained. His own proclamation, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand,' indicated that he, with others, stood only on the borders of it. The small in that kingdom were greater than the greatest outside of it. 'Yet he that is but little (Gr. lesser) in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' But his preaching had been the means of rousing a widespread and overpowering enthusiasm for the attainment of that higher condition of existence. The popular impulse in that direction resembled the siege, assault and capture of some citadel. There was the wild excitement of a crusade; the eager and impetuous were to the front, with more thought of gaining possession by violent efforts of the coveted prize, than of subsequently holding it in a quiet spirit.

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'And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force.' This misdirected energy needed to be turned into its proper channel. It could not be right that God's kingdom should be seized upon after this rough fashion. The old order of things was changing, giving place to the new. The forms of religious teaching which had sufficed during so many centuries, seemed suddenly to have lost their influence, if not their vitality. John came administering baptism for repentance, as though the initiatory rite of circumcision were not sufficient for those times. Until he came, things had gone on in the

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4 Mat. 5, 6

old grooves. 'For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.' But he was sent to introduce something else: the moral, social reformation needed in those degenerate days, and which had been foretold by Malachi: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers with the children, and the heart of the children with their fathers; lest I come and smite the land with a curse.' If they were disposed to regard and welcome John as the

\* 11 Mat. 14

promised Reformer, he would prove such to them. 'And if ye are willing to receive *it* (or, him), this is Elijah, which is to come.' Young renders, 'who was about to come.' Not all of them could read the signs of the times, or comprehend the message which the Baptist brought; but whoever could, let him mark and ponder: 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' This enlogium and testimony to the divine mission of John did not meet with universal assent.

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7 Luke 29

The body of the people, even those commonly regarded as most degraded—the tax collectors—had confessed their misdeeds, and had submitted to his baptism. 'And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being (or, having been) baptized with the baptism of John.' But the influential class did not regard John's work as consistent with the divine purposes and dealings, and had



stood aloof from the new Teacher and his baptism. 'But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not (or, not having been) baptized of him.' Matthew states that 'many of the Pharisees and Sadducees' went to John's baptism; but however many the exceptions, as a body they repudiated his course of action and scorned his emblematic rite of baptism. Jesus told them plainly that they were hard to please: let good come to them in what form it might, they simply indulged in cavils and criticisms. He was somewhat at a loss to find any fit illustration of such conduct. 'Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like?' Like to nothing manly, but rather to children; like to nothing real and earnest, but rather to children at play, occupying indeed seats in the market, but with no serious ideas of business, filling the place with clamour, not even agreeing among themselves as to what games they should play, but dissatisfied about everything. 'They are like unto children that sit in the market-place, and call one to another; which say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep.' What justification could there be for mutual aversion, cross purposes and childlike dissensions, between themselves and the two great Teachers who had come forth as national Reformers? John had chosen one mode of life: 'Nothing human about it, by far too ascetic,' said they. Jesus had adopted another: that, forsooth, was far too socialistic; here was a frequenter of feasts, and a lover of sinners! 'For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil (Gr. demon). The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' The justification for either of these modes of life, was to be found in the wisdom of the spirit which dictated it. A course of solitary asceticism might be chosen by one, a life of cheerful, friendly, social intercourse by another: and each might best gain, in his own way, the influence for good at which he aimed. 'And wisdom is (or, was) justified of all her children.' The Sinaitic MS. reads, 'of all her works;' and the Revisers, in the corresponding passage in Matthew render: 'And wisdom is (or, was) justified by her works,' instead of 'But wisdom is justified of her children,' as in the Authorised Version. The Sinaitic MS. there reads, 'of her works,' which was also the original reading of the Vatican MS., though altered by a later hand.

7 Luke 30

3 Mat. 7

7 Luke 31

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11 Mat. 19

The appositeness of the title 'Son of man,' which Jesus here gives himself, is evident from the context. It indicates his oneness with all that appertains to humanity: he was brother to every man, and would not hold himself aloof from a participation in all that properly belongs to social intercourse. The persistency with which Jesus applied to himself that designation is remarkable. No one else ever called him 'the Son of man'; on the contrary, he was sometimes addressed as 'the Son of God.' He must have had weighty reasons for choosing the former appellation, which he adopted at an early period of his career as a Teacher. May not one among them have been a desire to obviate any idea that he would imitate the spirit of critical exclusiveness, and austerity of life, which marked his forerunner John the Baptist? If Jesus consorted chiefly with the lower classes, it was not from any disinclination on his part to associate with the higher.

7 Luke 36

He scrupled not, when an invitation was given him, to partake of hospitality in the house of a Pharisee. 'And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.' But the hold he had obtained over even the most degraded, and the reverence with which he was regarded by some of them, became evident even in the house of the Pharisee. A woman of the city, notoriously of bad character, heard where he was. Something in his preaching must have stirred her soul to its lowest depths. She seized the opportunity, and determined to manifest her respect and gratitude in the best way she could. Taking an alabaster flask of ointment, one of those commonly used for the better preservation of the unguent (Alford), she managed to obtain access to the guest chamber, and there set herself to perform on the person of Jesus the menial office of anointing the feet. It was a common action in those times, and Wetstein (quoted by Alford) explained that it was the Jews' custom to embrace the feet of their Rabbis, in token of honour and affection. After the ordinary manner of persons at table, Jesus would be reclining on a couch, on the left side, turned towards the table, and his feet would be behind him. (Alford.) As the poor, lost woman stooped over his feet, her tears fell fast, and with her hair she wiped them away, kissing his feet again and again, whilst she applied the fragrant ointment. 'And behold a woman

7 Luke 37, 38

which was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse (or, a flask) of ointment, and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed (Gr. kissed much) his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.' The Pharisee sat watching this performance, and drew from it an unfavourable inference. His mind seems to have been in doubt with respect to Jesus, and this act of the woman decided him. If Jesus were a heaven-sent prophet, he would have had a quicker perception of the contaminating touch of evil than he appeared to possess; he would have been better able to read the characters of those who approached his person. 'Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner.' The thought was 'within himself,' confined to his own breast, though he may have disclosed it subsequently. Any of the twelve apostles could have told him how utterly erroneous was his criticism of Jesus; but forthwith the thought of his heart was answered with marvellous intuition by Jesus himself, who startled him by asking his attention to the remark he was about to make.

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'And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.' The host thereupon, with outward courtesy, assured the

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guest of his respectful attention. 'And he saith, Master (or, Teacher), say on.' Then Jesus spake this parable. 'A certain lender had two

,, 41, 42

debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. When they had not *wherewith* to pay, he forgave them both.' These sums would represent respectively less than £20 and £2; or, considering that a 'penny' was the hire of a day labourer, we may estimate their present value as £100 and £10. Each of the debtors being freed from the obligation to pay his debt, which of them would

20 Mat. 2

show most gratitude? 'Which of them therefore will love him most?' Simon could only guess that it would be the largest debtor; and Jesus approved the answer. 'Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou has rightly judged.' Then Jesus made a personal application of the parable, contrasting and comparing together the sinful woman and the criticising Pharisee. 'And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman?' There she stood, her face dumbly eloquent with penitential grief and loving reverence. There sat Simon, critically contemplating her and the guest he had bidden. Beyond the mere invitation to the meal, Simon had shown Jesus but scant courtesy. Some customary marks of respect he had not thought it worth while to render. No foot bath had been provided, the kiss of greeting had not been bestowed, the ceremony of anointing the head had been dispensed with. Simon had no intention of being punctilious in respect of civilities; he deemed it quite enough that he had asked Jesus to his table, without a thought of tendering him such tokens of esteem as were reserved for guests held in high honour and distinction. But that poor, despised woman had otherwise thought of him and acted towards him. Urged by emotions of deepest gratitude, she had done her utmost in the way of service and respect: her overflowing tears had supplied the place of water, and her hair she had used as a towel; the ointment she had brought she did not dare to pour forth on his head, but she could venture to anoint his feet therewith. Jesus had observed it all, and he now emphasises the contrast between those two. 'I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss (Gr. kiss much) my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment.' What did all this betoken? Surely, that she lay under the greatest obligations to Jesus, and could neither refrain her own spirit nor be withheld by fear of criticism from testifying her gratitude and veneration. She was the debtor to whom much had been forgiven. 'Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven.'

Again we come upon the vexed question of the forgiveness of sins. Let us be sure, in the first place, that the expression 'forgiveness of sins' denotes a reality, not a fiction, an actual fact, nor a mere form of words; it is a declaration which has a meaning and result; it is not merely a change of intention on the part of the forgiver, and of mental attitude on the part of the forgiven; it is an assurance bound up with a consequence. Jesus compares it, even identifies it, with the forgiveness of a debt. We know what that involves. The debtor has received something which he is bound to account for, but which he has either lost or spent. His breach of duty entails serious consequences: he is liable to be stripped of all he possesses, to be deprived of his home comforts, to forfeit his position in society, and to be doomed to a course of arduous labour, with no hope of release or advantage to himself until the whole debt has been cancelled. All joy, and hope, and self-respect, pass away from his life for the time being, and there stretches out before him a dark and cheerless future. But if the creditor remits the debt, what



a change in the position, prospects and feelings of the debtor! A change equivalent to that had come to this poor, lost woman. She could not redeem the past, but the 'good news' preached by Jesus had convinced her that God would not exact what she could not restore, and that, being free from the curse of the old and wrongful life, she was also free to choose henceforth a career of honest, honourable industry. It was because of this her heart overflowed with gratitude, and she deemed no gift too precious, no service too menial, no demonstration of respect too great, for him who had brought peace to her sin-laden soul, and turned her feet into the paths of virtue and self-respect. Forgiven sins, like forgiven debts, exist no longer: to continue sinning after forgiveness, would be equivalent to go on borrowing after cancellation of the debt. That would be a contradiction in terms, a delusion, an absurdity. The woman forgiven was a woman reformed, transformed, renewed in the spirit of her mind; how else could she have come to love a Teacher so lofty and pure as Jesus? Nothing less than this, and nothing more than this, can logically and properly be deduced from the narrative. The woman had not sinned against him. He, personally, had nothing to forgive; but God's forgiveness, with all that it involves of reformation and consolation, had come to her through him. Jesus did not say, 'I have forgiven her sins;' and no man should venture to insert into his words a sense they do not bear. He simply declared the fact that the woman was forgiven, and her love to him was the token of it. We know that on a prior occasion Jesus said to a palsied man, 'Thy sins are forgiven,' and had justified that absolution by bidding him rise and walk, thereby proving—what? That the man had sinned against Jesus? was a debtor to Jesus? and that Jesus in his own name forgave him? No: but that Jesus, being a man on earth, had authority to forgive: 'But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power (or, authority) on earth to forgive sins.' We cannot help drawing from the parable one of two inferences: either the woman was the 'debtor' to Jesus, or she was not; either he was the 'lender,' or he was not; either the forgiveness was direct, from himself, or he acted as the agent of the creditor to whom the woman was responsible—God. How would they who heard the parable from the lips of Jesus understand it? As a matter of fact, the woman owed Jesus nothing, she was not responsible to him for the actions of her life, but to God: therefore he could only pronounce forgiveness in the name and by the authority of God, and the woman's love of Jesus testified her gratitude to God. The details of the parable must not be pressed beyond the main intention of the Speaker. The object of Jesus was not to assert that these two persons stood in the position of debtors to him, but merely to illustrate the fact that in proportion to the sense of forgiveness must be the sense of gratitude. The great love of the woman indicated the mighty change that had been wrought in her; the smallness of the respect which Simon had shown for Jesus proved that his influence over Simon as a Teacher had been little; there had resulted no great awakening of conscience, no vast moral transformation. 'But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little:' rendered very expressively by Young: 'But to whom little is forgiven, little he loveth.'

Probably others besides the master of the house had pointed scorn-

29 Mat. 2

„ 65

7 Luke 47



fully at the woman. Jesus now comforts her with an assuring word. 'And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.' This saying at once 7 Luke 48 excited comment and discussion among the guests. Even if they accepted Jesus' declaration of the fact that the woman was forgiven, they could not understand on what ground he claimed the prerogative of pronouncing absolution. 'And they that sat at meat with him 49 began to say within (or, among) themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins?' Evidently they regarded the matter from a different point of view than Jesus. He had declared that the power or authority of forgiveness was an attribute of humanity: 'The Son of 5 Luke 24 man hath power (or, authority) on earth to forgive sins.' If it were not so, how could he have taught: 'If ye forgive men their tres- 6 Mat. 14 passes, your heavenly Father will also forgive you?' A man may forgive a sin when it is done to the injury of himself. Has he no power to forgive that same sin because it is done to the injury of others? What is forgiveness of sin? Is it not the deliverance of the sinner from the penal consequences of sin? That is sometimes beyond the reach, but often—oftener than is generally supposed—within the reach of humanity. But the Jews argued: 'Who can 5 Luke 21 forgive sins, but God alone?' On that question Jesus joined issue with them. He did not admit that argument: he taught men to forgive sins; to pray for forgiveness from God in proportion to their own exercise of it towards others; he seized on opportunities of publicly expressing his own forgiveness of sins which others did not, would not, and said, indeed, that neither they nor any man could forgive. So by them this woman remained unforgiven: God only could forgive her; no one was authorized to pronounce forgiveness in his name; to her life's end she must bear her burden of guilt, in the eyes of man, for no human voice might dare to pronounce her pardon. Against such ideas Jesus protested and contended. Her ruin and her guilt were of man's doing; let her now experience a man's undoing of the past. She needed words of hope, of sympathy, of comfort, of forgiveness. Jesus offered them; she believed and accepted them. Yet not for an instant would he have her think that his bestowal of forgiveness was a divine or priestly function exercised by him independently of herself. Her own faith, not his absolution, was her salvation. 'And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath 7 Luke 50 saved thee:' her faith in him, in the message he delivered, in the fatherly love of God, in the possibility of reformation and sanctification. But must she not have been disposed to urge that it was rather his faith in her, which first saved her from self-despair, and kindled her trust in God? It was not well, however, that she should stay longer in that company to be talked about and criticised. Let her go away untroubled by their faithless cavils, with his words only sounding in her ears. 'Go in peace.'

To the preaching of his 'good news' the life of Jesus was now entirely devoted. He entered upon a missionary tour, discoursing wherever he could hope to gather a congregation. 'And it came to 8 Luke 1 pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings (or, gospel) of the kingdom of God.' The Revisers have inserted 'soon' before 'afterwards,' and replaced 'every city and village' by 'cities and villages.' These alterations are not in accordance with Tischendorf or Young, nor

with the literal rendering in 'The Englishman's Greek New Testament.'

Accompanying Jesus were the twelve disciples he had chosen, and certain women who had been restored to health by his marvellous power. Three of them are mentioned by name: Mary called Magdalene, probably from Magdala in Galilee, Joanna and Susanna. The condition of Mary had been most distressing, involving that uncontrollable perversion of the moral and physical nature known in those days as demoniacal possession, and in a form so intense that she was believed to have been swayed by seven demons. Joanna was well known as the wife of Herod's steward. Although only three women are specially named, there were many others. It is not clear whether they went simply to see and hear Jesus, or to share in some way in the work of evangelization; probably the latter, by inducing

8 Luke 2, 3 some of their own sex to attend the preaching of Jesus. 'And with him the twelve, and certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven devils (or, demons) had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chusa Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others.' As Jesus and his disciples received no remuneration for their labours, these women did not scruple to assist the cause by helping to defray out of their own funds the cost of food and travel: 'which ministered unto them of their substance.' The Revisers and Tischendorf have followed the Vatican MS. by putting 'them' instead of 'him,' although many ancient authorities read 'him.' Any general distribution would naturally be spoken of as a gift to him, he being the organizer and leader of the missionary enterprise.

The fame of Jesus grew and spread. Crowds resorted to his preaching, every city sending forth some who were anxious to see and hear him. Finding himself surrounded by representatives of all classes and from all quarters, Jesus delivered an apposite parable.

4 'And when a great multitude came together, and they of every city resorted unto him, he spake by a parable.' Mark states that the address was delivered by the sea side. 'And again he began to teach by the sea side.' Matthew's account is graphic as to time and place, evidently from one who was an eye witness. 'On that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.' No house could hold the people, and the beach was chosen as being away from traffic; probably Jesus seated himself near to the sea, so that the listeners, being on the slope of the beach, would all look towards the speaker. But the pressure of the crowd was so great that Jesus left his seat, stepped into a boat, and thence addressed the people. 'And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach.' As they listened eagerly, Jesus delivered not one but many parables. 'And he spake to them many things in parables.' We have frequent indications of the emphatic, sententious, striking way in which Jesus was in the habit of discoursing. With a solemn word, sometimes repeated, he would claim the thoughtful attention of his hearers; and we may be sure that his attitude, gestures, looks, gave additional force and charm to his words. We are accustomed to his, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you.' Here he opens his discourse with the word 'Hearken.' And then, as though he saw before his

eyes the picture he would display to others, he added, 'Behold.' 'And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them 4 Mark 2, 3 in his teaching, Hearken : Behold, the sower went forth to sow.' He scattered the grain with no niggard hand, and in his anxiety to cover the field some fell upon the roadside. 'And as he sowed, some *seeds* 13 Mat. 4 fell by the way side.' The Revisers have followed the Authorised Version by inserting the word 'seeds' in italics. Young does not, not venturing to introduce a word, needlessly, which is not in the original. A mere translator should not improve upon the author. On the plan adopted of making everything easy, leaving nothing to the reader's judgment, it became necessary to make a similar insertion 4 Mark 4 in Mark, but there it is put in the singular, 'seed.' In Luke, however, the word 'seed' is not italicised, as it stands in the original. 8 Luke 5 Did Luke 'improve' the original narrative, in the same spirit and way as translators—Dr. Young excepted—now 'improve' the original? A close study of the Synoptic Gospels has led scholars who are able to form an opinion and are not afraid to express it, to that conclusion. The following passage is taken from Abbott and Rushbrooke's 'Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels.' 'A comparison of the Gospel of Luke, in the original, with that of St. Mark would place beyond doubt the conclusion that the educated physician who composed the third of our Synoptic Gospels, altered many words and expressions in the Earlier Tradition, in conformity with a more exact and polite usage : but in most instances a knowledge of Greek is required to appreciate such a demonstration. One or two examples, however, may be made intelligible to the English reader. In the Stilling of the Tempest Matthew and Mark speak of Jesus, on the lake of Gennesaret, "rebuking the *sea*" (Mark iv. 39, Matthew viii. 26) and describe how "even the wind and the *sea*" obey Jesus. In both cases Luke uses "water" or "waters." This might be thought an accident, but it is not. For in the Exorcism of the Gadarene, whereas Mark and Matthew use the word "sea" (Mark v. 13, Matthew viii. 32), Luke uses "lake ;" and this makes clear the motive of his correction. He objects to the application of the word "sea," where "lake" is more appropriate. Again in Mark ii. 4—9, 11, 12, we find four times repeated a word "bed," concerning which it is said by the Grammarian Phrynichus that "only the *canaille* use this word ;" consequently Matthew (ix. 2) and Luke (v. 18) substitute for it the word "couch ;" and when Luke finds himself compelled to repeat the word, he resorts to the word "little couch" (Luke v. 19, 24) rather than employ a word condemned by polite usage.'

The seed cast upon the roadway, by which Alford understands 'the path through the field,' remaining uncovered and unprotected, became simply food for birds. 'And the birds came and devoured 13 Mat. 4 them.' A portion was scattered over places where the plough could not penetrate the hard rock beneath the thin layer of earth. 'And 5 others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth.' The growth there was quicker, but chiefly upwards ; the tiny root could not draw from the soil sufficient moisture to resist the sun's heat, so that the plant first flagged and then withered. 'And 5, 6 straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth : and when the sun was risen, they were scorched ; and because they had no root, they withered away.' Some of the sowing fell upon



13 Mat. 7

thorn-infested ground ; the seed sprang up, but the weeds with it, and they, having the first and strongest hold upon the ground, strangled the life out of the better but weaker plant. 'And others fell upon the thorns ; and the thorns grew up, and choked them.' But not all the seed was destined to be thus wasted. The bulk, of course, fell into the soil prepared for it, there sprang up, increased in growth, fructified, and yielded a large, albeit varying crop, some producing a hundred, some sixty, some thirty per cent. 'And others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.'

,, 8

4 Mark 2-8

There is a very close verbal agreement between Matthew and Mark in this parable, yet with some peculiar differences. In Matthew the plural is used throughout, as applying to 'seeds,' in Mark the singular, as to 'seed.' Mark introduces at the opening the word 'hearken ;' then the words 'it came to pass ;' he has 'among the thorns' instead of 'upon the thorns ;' he inserts 'and it yielded no fruit ;' he has 'into the good ground' instead of 'upon the good ground ;' he inserts 'growing up and increasing ;' he has 'brought forth' for 'yielded fruit ;' and he reverses the ratio of productiveness, Matthew having it 'some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty,' Mark 'thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.' These are just such divergences as would arise in the taking of hastily-written notes of the discourse by different hearers, either during or immediately after its delivery : the less important words, being omitted at the time, would have to be supplied from memory, and the choice of a word might necessitate its repetition, as when Mark, having once used 'seed' for 'seeds,' retains it throughout and inserts 'it' instead of 'they.' The opening words 'hearken' and 'it came to pass,' it may be supposed, appeared only in the MS. of one of the writers ; the omitted word 'among' was replaced by 'upon,' and 'brought forth' became 'yielded fruit,' or vice versa ; one of the scribes caught the words 'growing up and increasing,' which were omitted by the other ; and through defect of memory one of them reversed the order of the closing words.

8 Luke 4-8

Luke's version of the parable, which is terser than the others, appears either to have come from another source or to have received touches from his own hand. After 'the sower went forth to sow' there are added the words 'his seed' ; after 'birds,' the words 'of heaven' are inserted ; he says of the seed by the way side that, 'it was trodden under foot,' a fact not stated by Matthew or Mark ; he explains the withering of the seed upon the rock by saying 'because it had no moisture,' which would be the natural result of the want of 'deepness of earth' mentioned by the two other evangelists but not by Luke ; and he misses altogether the varying degrees of productiveness, alluding only to the highest, 'a hundredfold.'

13 Mat. 9

4 Mark 9

8 Luke 8

According to Matthew, Jesus ended the parable with the words : 'He that hath ears, let him hear.' Mark puts this as supplemental : 'And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.' Luke states, further, that Jesus emphasized the words by loudness of voice : 'As he said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' These distinctions indicate three independent original narrators of the discourse, two of whom caught and recorded the words 'to hear,' omitted by Matthew, and one of whom thought it well to note the emphatic way in which Jesus uttered the words. Later on,



some student of the sacred writings took upon himself to alter Matthew's version, probably with the view to harmonizing it with Mark or Luke, and of bringing out the meaning more clearly. The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. agreed, but in the former a later hand inserted the words 'to hear,' and many ancient authorities seem to have adopted the alteration. We are indebted to the Revisers for restoring the passage to its original integrity.

Jesus left the parable unexplained, and his closing words seem to imply that he desired every hearer to make his own interpretation and application of it: 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' Here was a great, undeniable, natural truth to ponder over: that the fruitfulness of all seed sown depended chiefly upon the kind of soil into which it was cast, and upon the circumstances which would act upon it during growth. The disciples, however, could not understand the object of Jesus in thus confining himself to figurative discourses, and they took upon themselves to ask him. 'And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?' Mark also states that the question related to the parables generally. 'And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parables.' The Authorised Version has the word 'parable,' but the Revisers have restored the plural as it stands in the two oldest MSS. Luke, however, represents the request of the disciples as applying to this particular parable. 'And his disciples asked him what this parable might be.' We should always remember that Luke's narrative does not profess to be an original record, but was compiled by himself, in the way he judged best, from the various reliable sources of information which were at his command. He declares himself to have been a compiler, not a reporter.

Jesus gave a full reply to the question of the disciples. To them was granted a knowledge of heavenly things, which was not possessed by others. 'And he answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' Those outside the favoured circle had only similitudes, ideal representations of truths not fully and clearly grasped. 'And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables.' Luke puts it: 'And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables.' The parable was in existence, before the eyes of men, prior to its utterance by Jesus; and all the dealings of God with man find their representations and analogies in what we term the course of nature and providence: 'all things are done in parables,' and by grasping the laws and truths of the visible world, we are learning, or should learn, the methods of God's dealings with our spirits. If the disciples gained more knowledge than others, it was because they already had and could exercise more. 'For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance.' Every acquirement increases the power of further acquisition. Knowledge must be built up, one degree upon another; if not, the small basis from which it starts will itself crumble away: the ignorance of a man is more hopeless than that of a child, for all science must start from first principles, and for lack of exercise the mental powers lose their cunning, and the ability to learn becomes lessened or lost. 'But whosoever

13 Mat. 10

4 Mark 10

8 Luke 9

13 Mat. 11

4 Mark 11

8 Luke 10

13 Mat. 12

,, 12

13 Mat. 13

hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.' That was the condition of mind which Jesus recognized in the bulk of his hearers; and for that reason he determined to adapt his teaching to their capacities, the first necessity being to bring their minds into active exercise, that they might look outside themselves, see that the common events of daily life were full of spiritual significance, and gradually learn to observe, think and judge for themselves. The parabolic method was best suited for those whose sight was dulled, whose hearing was obtuse, whose understanding was deficient. 'Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.' So general and so deep was this callous ignorance, that the people stood not one whit above the level of those to whom Isaiah was sent and vainly prophesied seven centuries before. The prophet's graphic condemnation of his contemporaries might be applied in all its fulness to the existing generation. 'And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which saith,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;  
 And seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:  
 For this people's heart is waxed gross,  
 And their ears are dull of hearing,  
 And their eyes they have closed;  
 Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,  
 And hear with their ears,  
 And understand with their heart,  
 And should turn again,  
 And I should heal them.'

Mark 11, 12

8 Luke 10

The prevalent spirit was one of wilful blindness, deafness, ignorance. There was a shrinking from the unpalatable realities of truth and righteousness, an averseness from the divine will, and a set purpose to reject all teaching which had for its object the reformation of heart and life. All this seems plain enough in the narrative of Matthew and the quotation from Isaiah, but Mark and Luke give the merest outline of the views here expressed by Jesus, and the imperfect way in which they record his words is apt to cause astonishment and lead to very erroneous ideas. Mark's account is as follows: 'And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand: lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them.' Luke has: 'And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' This reads to us as though Jesus had explained that his special object in speaking parables was to leave the people in ignorance; to hinder their reformation and forgiveness. Happily we are able to gather from Matthew's fuller account the real meaning of Jesus, and can feel certain that his intention was the very opposite, and that any want of comprehension on the part of his hearers could only arise from their own ignorance and unwillingness. Abbreviated discourses are always liable to be misunderstood, and never more so than when the speaker utters thoughts which are original, or uncommon, or emphatically expressed,

and illustrated by quotations. A careless or incompetent hearer may easily misunderstand, and unintentionally misrepresent, the drift of a discourse : he may be so impressed by some striking passage in it, as to overlook the train of thought and argument to which it is subsidiary. Another and a greater risk of misconception must have arisen from the necessarily condensed form of the notes taken at the time : a reporter must trust more or less to memory ; even in our own days, the contractions and vowel omissions are so numerous as to make it necessary for the writer to expand his manuscript with the least delay possible. If we assume the notes to have been taken in ordinary characters, they would often contain mere hints, reminiscences and reminders of the general tenor of the discourse ; and if handed down in that state, those who prized them could only perpetuate them in the same form. Possibly it was so in the case before us : Mark seems to have possessed a few words only of the quotation. Luke still fewer ; and neither of them shows any consciousness of the fact that they were not those of Jesus himself, but were borrowed from Isaiah. It is quite conceivable that both evangelists may have been in doubt as to the proper sense and application of the saying : all they could do was to hand it down in the form in which it had reached them. The Authors of 'The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels' assume that the earliest records must have been in a condensed form. They say (page xxvii) : 'Now let us suppose that the earliest records upon which the Gospels are based consisted of brief notes occasionally resembling the Mishna in respect of obscurity.' They admit also that the evangelists must have compiled from different documents ; see the footnote page viii : 'Where Matthew and Luke agree, and Mark is altogether wanting, they borrowed from some document or tradition containing the parables and larger discourses of Christ.'

The opinion which Jesus expressed respecting the low degree of intelligence and spiritual perception in the multitude of his hearers was uttered before a select few : for Mark explains that : 'When he 4 Mark 10  
was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parables.' These, doubtless, were disciples of Jesus, and he congratulated them on the advantages they possessed over others, in being able and willing both to see and hear. 'But blessed are your eyes, 13 Mat. 16  
for they see ; and your ears, for they hear.' Their openness and sincerity of mind made them receptive of those high spiritual truths which appertained to the 'gospel' and 'the kingdom of heaven,' and which Jesus had lately outlined and enforced in his Sermon on the mount. Such teaching placed them on a higher level of thought and duty than any previous system of faith and practice. Many teachers and rightminded men of old had longed for doctrines such as these, but there had been no one able to discern and enunciate them. 'For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not : and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.' Did they really feel themselves unable to grasp the import of the parable he had just delivered ? If that were so, they had yet much to learn, for the world was full of similar parables, all symbolizing spiritual truths to minds capable of perceiving and interpreting them. 'And he 4 Mark 13  
saith unto them, Know ye not this parable ? and how shall ye know all the parables ?' Then Jesus, according to Matthew, said : 'Hear 13 Mat. 18



s Luke 11

then ye the parable of the sower.' Luke has simply: 'Now the parable is this.' Mark has no corresponding words, but he alone records the two questions, 'Know ye not this parable? How shall ye know all the parables?' These discrepancies are precisely what we should expect to find in the words of a speech as given by different reporters, some of whom would take down what others omitted, and all of whom would have either to expand their notes for the sake of greater clearness, or leave them in their contracted and consequently more dubious form. The authors of 'The Common Tradition' assume that the evangelists themselves expanded the notes from one single record, which imaginary document is styled, therefore, 'the common tradition'; that Mark adhered very closely to it, and Matthew and Luke added to it by the help of other documents or traditions, and occasionally inserted or altered forms of expression and connections. The theory is very elaborate, subject to many exceptions and qualifications; and it can be entirely dispensed with if, instead of one imaginary 'common tradition,' we assume the bases of the 'gospels' to have been various existing records of the acts and words of Jesus. The substantial agreement between the accounts of them must not be taken as indicating the document issued by one reporter, from which other reporters, who were not present, worked up a narrative subsequently. Suppose three accounts of a trial to be compiled by three different persons from various newspapers, each of which had its own reporter, and from various other sources. Suppose that all the words in the three compilations which were in exact agreement with the words in the shortest of the compilations were then to be printed in heavy type: it would be absurd to argue that because of the exact agreement of those words in the three compilations, all three of the compilers must have worked from a 'common tradition' which contained only, or chiefly, the words in the heavy type. Yet this is what is assumed by the authors of 'The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels.' Taking Mark, the tersest of the three, as containing most of the 'common tradition,' they put in heavy type in the three accounts, all the words that correspond, thereby leaving very little in Mark's gospel beyond what appears in Matthew and Luke. That shows two things: (1) That Mark wrote more briefly than the others. (2) That there is a substantial and perfect agreement between the three as to the main facts. But is it right to designate that 'common agreement' by the title of a 'common tradition,' thereby implying that the agreeing words formed the substance of an ancient document, apart from other ancient documents, to which all the evangelists were able to refer? Alford says: 'The testimony of the early Church is unanimous, that Matthew was *first* among the Evangelists;' and: 'The author of this Gospel has been universally believed to be the Apostle Matthew. With this belief the contents of the Gospel are not inconsistent; and we find it current in the very earliest ages.' If that be so, what ground can there be for imagining the existence of a 'common tradition,' Matthew having been with Jesus from the beginning, seeing, hearing, judging, remembering, probably noting down also, for himself? Of Mark's gospel Alford says: 'It was universally believed in the ancient Church, that Mark's gospel was written under the influence, and almost by the dictation, of Peter.' The idea of a



written 'common tradition' from which 'the three Evangelists borrowed independently,' is therefore contrary to the opinions of the ancient Church.

The interpretation given by Jesus of the parable of the sower is as follows: 'The sower soweth the word.' That is peculiar to Mark. <sup>4 Mark 14</sup> Luke has: 'The seed is the word of God.' Matthew has neither, <sup>8 Luke 11</sup> but alludes incidentally to 'the word of the kingdom.' The fair and natural inference from such discrepancies is that the three evangelists had no one manuscript in common, but each compiled his narrative from independent sources of information. Matthew would trust to his own memory, or his own notes. Mark had one account, Luke another or others, differing somewhat but not contradictory. Assuming a variety of accounts, equally honest and reliable, they will harmonize and fit into each other, without precisely agreeing. Combining them, we ought to have still either the exact words of the speaker or the sense of them, and there is no reason to suppose we have not: 'The sower soweth the word. The seed is the word of God.' But instead of regarding the narrative in that light, the authors of 'The Common Tradition' would have us assume that Matthew, Mark and Luke had, each of them before him, a particular manuscript, condensed but reliable, out of the materials supplied by which each evangelist compiled his narrative, adding and altering to bring out the sense according to his own ideas, Matthew and Luke occasionally, 'where Mark' (that is, 'the original tradition contained in Mark') is altogether wanting, borrowing from some document or tradition, containing the parables and longer discourses of Christ.' (Foot-note to page viii.) And this imaginary 'common tradition,' so far as it can be disentangled in the interpretation of the parable of the sower, (which may be taken as an example), being put in heavy type, comprises the following words: 'Parable . . the word . . are they by the way . . cometh . . them . . they . . upon the rocky . . heard the word . . with joy . . have no root . . for awhile . . they . . among the thorns; these are they . . the good ground . . hear the word . . bear fruit.' In three different histories containing the same discourse, these are the only words in which the three historians agree exactly. A similar result would be arrived at in taking any three independent reports of any particular discourse, except that in these days the agreeing words would be much more numerous, owing to fuller and more accurate reporting. But how can any such agreement possibly justify the conclusion that the three reporters worked up their accounts from one and the same document?

Taking together the two expressions, 'The sower soweth the word. The seed is the word of God,' there is a breadth and force of application which would otherwise be missed. For the sowing and the teaching are thereby described, not as human but divine. The hearts of men are God's seed plot. His monitions fall upon our souls without an effort upon our part; they are scattered broadcast, each one having in it powers of life and growth, contingent only upon our own nature and disposition. The message from God may pierce our dull, deaf ears, but fail to show its sacred meaning to our yet duller minds. It lies outside our unreceptive souls, and there is an active adversary ever on the watch to snatch it away altogether. 'When any one <sup>13 Mat. 19</sup>

4 Mark 15

8 Luke 2

heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, *then* cometh the evil *one*, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side.' Matthew has 'the evil one,' Mark 'Satan' (rendered by Young 'adversary'), and Luke 'the devil.' Mark denotes by the word 'straightway' the quickness of the action, and Luke states its object: 'that they may not believe and be saved.' Throughout the interpretation Matthew uses the singular 'he,' Mark and Luke the plural, 'they.' These divergences indicate independent narratives. Probably that of Matthew is verbally correct: the others have the appearance of reports given by listeners who took the sense correctly, so fully, indeed, as to be unconscious of having changed 'the evil one' into 'the adversary,' and 'the devil;' and one of the listeners was impressed by and retained the word 'straightway,' which was passed by the others. On one important point they agree: that Jesus expressed his conviction that men were exposed to hostile influences of a spiritual character, God sowing good seed, and the wicked Adversary being on the watch to hinder its growth. The mystery of good and evil in conflict within us calls for explanation. It is a fact, and must have an origin. The mind of Jesus fixed on a solution: we have not his knowledge, and we shall do well to ponder his teachings on this point, yet without presuming to apply them indiscriminately and universally to our own times and surroundings. His acquaintance with unseen spiritual realities can be no justification for our intrusion into matters of which we are not competent to speak; and to say a thing must now be, because he said it was so once, is not to learn truth from him, but only to repeat, as parrot-cries, his solemn utterances. The preachers who talk of the devil now uprooting the seed *they* sow, how know we or they that it would be worth the Adversary's while to do so? Their positiveness, their pretentiousness, their intolerance, their uncharitableness, their blunderings in logic, science and scripture, have often been but too palpable to intelligent hearers listening in patient silence.

The expression recorded by Luke: 'that they may not believe and be saved,' requires consideration. The subject of 'salvation' has been so long preached about, that careful thought is needed to get at the original and proper meaning of the term. There is no more elastic or comprehensive word in the Scriptures, and its significance should never be assumed without reference to the context. The growth of good seed 'saves' the ground from barrenness or from weeds. The idea conveyed by the expression 'believe and be saved,' lies somewhat outside the range of the simile: but although faith has no connection with seed, the interpretation must be within the scope of the parable. The upspringing of faith in the heart is analogous to the development of a plant in the earth: everything that is within the soil, or falls upon it, or can be attracted to it, is used for the good of the seed, which becomes vitalized, transformed, grows downwards for moisture and upwards for light and air, until it stands forth as a new creation in God's world of usefulness and beauty. Such would be the natural effect produced by the reception and growth in a human heart of that 'word of the kingdom' which Jesus proclaimed. Such would be the salvation which the Adversary sought to hinder. The devil hates the seeds of God's planting, their flowers and fruits;

he loves to pervert and destroy them, leaving the world a barren, weedy wilderness instead of a blooming and fruitful garden.

The rocky ground which supplied for a time all that the seed required, but could not nourish it through heat and drought, was emblematic of the man who received unhesitatingly and with due appreciation the divine word, but whose heart was not deep enough to let its root grow downwards and expand; it flourished for a time on the surface of his nature, but when troublesome enquiries, sharp, contemptuous criticisms, insinuations and attacks of various kinds began to be made against him on account of the truth he had so readily embraced, he chose rather to let it fail, fade and perish, than bear the opposition, contempt or loss, to which its presence exposed him. 'And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that <sup>13 Mat. 20,</sup> <sup>21</sup> heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth.'

The thorn-infested soil represents the man whose heart is too pre-occupied and encumbered with other matters to give room for the growth of a principle of life and action which must needs be to him who receives it everything—or nothing. Divine monitions in the soul brook no competitors: they must either overbear or be overborne. The heart which is enwrapped in temporal cares, or deluded by the phantasm of worldly wealth, that mirage in life's desert which looks so gorgeous and so solid, but which is deceptive and evanescent, cannot give due thought or heed to hopes, labours, ambitions, which are apart from earthly successes and must find their fruition elsewhere. Intensity of devotion to things which are material, 'of the earth, earthy,' and sensuous, of the flesh, fleshly, must needs choke the seed of spiritual life, and make the soul barren in the things of God. 'And he that was sown among the thorns, that is he that <sup>22</sup> heareth the word; and the cares of the world (or, age), and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.' Mark adds after 'riches: 'and the lusts of other things entering in.' <sup>4 Mark 19</sup> In Luke the passage stands as follows: 'and that which fell among <sup>8 Luke 14</sup> the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' Tischendorf and Young omit the word '*this*,' which is inserted in italics. What other life than this could be intended?

The three evangelists bring out, as expressed in different ways, the idea that not wealth itself but its concomitant evils render the good seed unproductive: Matthew by applying the word 'deceitfulness' to 'riches; ' Mark by the expression, 'the lusts of other things entering in; ' and Luke by 'riches and pleasures of life.'

The good ground into which the seed was cast represents the honest and good heart which gives a fit reception to God's word. 'And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that <sup>13 Mat. 23</sup> heareth the word, and understandeth it.' For the comprehension of the divine will there must be a teachableness of disposition, followed by a patient learning of life's lesson with its manifold meanings. Some remain in wilful ignorance; others acquire the mere rudiments of heavenly wisdom, and forget them quickly; in some the higher culture is overborne by low, earthly anxieties, ambitions, gratifica-



tions. What Matthew terms 'understanding' Mark defines as 'acceptance.' 'And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it.' In Luke the word is stronger: the Authorised Version renders it 'keep,' Young translates it 'retain,' Tischendorf and the Revisers have 'hold fast.' 'And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast.'

Of the three evangelists, Luke alone records the expression, 'in an honest and good heart.' The theory put forth by the authors of 'The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels' would seem to leave us free to assume that these may have been Luke's own words, his way of expanding the meagre tradition before him. But we cannot think that any conscientious compiler of facts and discourses which were matters of history, would so play fast and loose with the narrative in his possession, as to insert a sentence of his own, in such a way as might let it be mistaken for one uttered by Jesus. We take the words to be his; and they stand out as his recognition of the qualities of honesty and goodness existing in many human hearts. His doctrine is not found to coincide with those ideas of universal depravity which, arising out of a mistaken view of apostolic teaching and a habit of quoting texts apart from contexts, have been so long, so earnestly, so emphatically advanced by theologians. Would any one of them dare to apply to men the words, 'in an honest and good heart?' Not, certainly, without explanations, reservations, qualifications, which were not added, and are not attachable, to the original utterance.

In good and honest souls God's word roots itself, grows, yields and ripens its proper, natural fruit. The produce will vary according to the kind of seed sown, the time of sowing, and the conditions under which it is placed, as of heat, cold, rain or drought. The ratio of productiveness lies within fixed limits, but there is a wide range for differences, in some cases the yield being exceptionally large, in others smaller, but at the least—abundant. 'Who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.' Matthew uses the singular number throughout, so that the degree of fruitfulness appears to depend upon atmospheric and other circumstances, not upon variations of soil. He speaks of one man, but Mark of several men. 'And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty fold and sixty fold and a hundred fold.' The view is equally correct that according to the varying capacities, acquirements and energies of men will be the fruits of their labours; but the question remains, What was the real drift of the parable? To compare soil with soil, that is—man with man? Or to show how, in each particular soil God's seed will fail or flourish, that is, how the individual man will deal with divine teachings, inspirations, leadings, the voice of conscience, 'the word of God' uttered within his soul? Matthew's account seems to be the most accurate. Luke does not mention the differences of productiveness in the seed, and he closes with an important word, 'patience,' which is not given by Matthew or Mark. 'And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.' The growth of knowledge, virtue, grace,

4 Mark 20

8 Luke 15

13 Mat 23

4 Mark 20

8 Luke 15



must be constant and gradual ; and in the course of development there will be occasion for hardihood, endurance, 'patience.' The heat of temptation, the chill of scorn, the stormy winds and rains of persecution, will test the soul to the uttermost ; but these trials, which blight the weak and choke the covetous, will increase the spiritual vigour and aid the moral growth of the honest and true-hearted.

Matthew next records a parable which is omitted by Mark and Luke, and as it was an important one and accompanied by a detailed explanation, it may probably be assumed that it had not come to their knowledge. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a man who sowed his field with seed of a good kind. 'Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field.' The 'kingdom of heaven,' which is rendered by Young 'the reign of the heavens,' obviously denotes a condition of things, a period in human history, when heavenly influences, doctrines, powers, are at work upon the earth, ruling over men, taking cognizance of their designs and actions, and leading onwards to a state of society in which the laws of heaven, that is, of God, will be supreme. An enemy of the husbandman maliciously determined to injure him as far as possible. The seed sown could neither be uprooted nor stopped in its growth ; but if the field were re-sown with weeds, the crop would be seriously damaged, if not utterly spoilt. So under cover of the night, when no watch was set, no evil being dreaded, this wicked plotter sowed tares over the wheat, and then went away undetected. 'But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares (or, darnel) also among the wheat, and went away.' In due time the wheat stalks sprang up, and the ears of corn began to show themselves. But then appeared also a growth of tares ; and the labourers, astonished and mortified, told the fact to the owner, questioned him as to the good quality of the seed he had sown, and asked his opinion as to the cause of so unexpected a phenomenon. 'But when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants (Gr. bondservants) of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field ? whence then hath it tares ?' He discerned at once the hand and work of an enemy, an idea which the servants had been slow to entertain. 'And he said unto them, An enemy (Gr. a man an enemy) hath done this.' Anxious to remedy the mischief, they suggested that it would be advisable forthwith to pull out the tares. 'And the servants (Gr. bondservants) say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up ?' That, he told them, would be an unwise proceeding, for it would involve the risk of uprooting the wheat at the same time. 'But he saith, Nay ; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them.' The roots of both were entangled, more or less, in the same soil : but there might be a further difficulty arising from the resemblance between the plants and the possibility of mistaking the one for the other. Alford quotes Jerome, who resided in Palestine : 'Between wheat and tares, which we call *lolium*, as long as both are in the blade, and the stalk is not yet in ear, there is a great similitude, and discrimination is difficult, if not impossible.' Under the circumstances the wisest plan would be to let both plants develop to full maturity, leaving the work of separation until harvest time. 'Let both grow

together until the harvest.' Then it would be comparatively easy for the reapers to disentangle the tares from the wheat, to bind up the former for fuel, and to store the latter in the barn. 'And in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them : but gather the wheat into my barn.'

13 Mat. 30

„ 31, 32 'Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field : which indeed is less than all seeds ; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.' Mark's record of this parable was obviously a direct account from one who was present at its delivery ; for he gives the few words uttered by Jesus by way of preface. 'And he said, How shall we liken the kingdom of God ? or in what parable shall we set it forth ?' The object was to select something very small which had an innate power of developing into something very great. The minute mustard grain would best serve to illustrate that characteristic of the divine rule, which Matthew, throughout the parables, speaks of as 'the kingdom of heaven,' and Mark and Luke as 'the kingdom of God.' The expressions may be regarded as interchangeable, and possibly may have been so used by Jesus. That would account for the one form being adopted in one narrative, and the other form in another narrative. The parable in Mark appears to be given with more exactitude

4 Mark 30

„ 31, 32 and fulness. 'It is like (Gr. As unto) a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds that are upon the earth, yet when it is sown, groweth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches ; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof.'

2 Dan. 44

Every seed of God's planting has powers of growth, and matures either for beauty or for usefulness. But the seed of 'the kingdom of God,' from the smallest beginnings will attain to the greatest results. Daniel had foretold : 'In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people ; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.' Jesus taught us to expect that God's kingdom will be greater than all, overshadowing all, but that it must be of gentle, gradual growth ; the smallest of seeds, the greatest of trees, with happy birds of heaven nestling in its branches : he prefers that simile to the emblem of the 'stone' which was 'cut out of the mountain without hands,' and 'brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold.' He gives us a better, truer simile than that which was granted to the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar.

„ 45

The parable of the mustard seed is recorded by Luke as though delivered some time subsequently. He prefaces it with the introductory words given by Mark, but the differences between the three evangelists here indicate that they all had separate records before them. Matthew says, 'which a man took, and sowed in his field :' Luke, 'which a man took, and cast into his own garden.' Luke misses altogether the point of the smallness of the seed, brought out so clearly by Matthew and Mark ; and he seems also, and by consequence, to have missed the contrast between the minuteness of the

seed and the surprising bulk of its product ; for he did not describe it as a 'great' tree, the Revisers having eliminated the word 'great' in accordance with the two oldest MSS. Again : in the Authorised Version Luke opens the parable with the words, 'Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like?' Tischendorf retains that wording ; Young renders, 'And he said.' Alford has, 'Thereupon he said,' with the note : 'The rendering *thereupon* is important, as pointing out the connexion.' The Revisers have made this apparent connexion even stronger : 'He said therefore, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it? It is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast it into his own garden ; and it grew, and became a tree ; and the birds of the heaven lodged in the branches thereof.' Now if we look to what precedes, there is really no connexion traceable between the healing of the infirm woman, the argument about the sabbath, and the parable of the mustard seed. Is it not obvious that in Luke this parable, and the following one of the hidden leaven, are out of place? Probably he possessed detached as well as connected records of the acts and sayings of Jesus, and with respect to their arrangement he must have exercised the best judgment he could, adhering as far as possible to his purpose of combining them 'in order,' but not omitting anything of interest because he could not be sure about its proper place in the sequence of events. Matthew and Mark give us in this part of their narratives a cluster of parables : Matthew seven, Mark four, with a statement that 'many such parables' were then delivered. Luke shows no consciousness of this fact ; he only gives two, and brings in two others of them much later.

'Another parable spake he unto them : the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.' Luke's account of this parable seems to have been handed down direct from one who heard it, for we have, as in the previous one, the words with which Jesus prefaced it. 'And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?' This form and mode of expression may be taken to indicate the fact that these addresses of Jesus were extemporaneous. All these parables were not in his mind when he began to speak. He was possessed with certain ideas respecting the nature and development of the heavenly, divine rule to be established in the earth, and in order to set forth its various aspects he grasped at the most appropriate similitudes he could find in the course of nature or of human life. He is now seeking some fit illustration of the sure, silent, gradual, transforming operation of the heavenly doctrines he proclaimed ; and he fixes upon this : 'It is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.' The idea conveyed by the simile of the leaven is different from that conveyed by the simile of the seed. The seed grows and is transformed, but not the earth in which it is planted ; the leaven works, spreads, changes and enlarges the lump of dough in which it is placed. The development of the divine rule in the individual and in the world must be wrought out in a similar way : quietly, unostentatiously, slowly but surely. No part of a man's character, no part of the world's business can escape its penetrative and assimilative influence.

Jesus adhered to his intention of addressing the multitude only in



the parabolic form. In public not a word in explanation of the similes was given; and herein Matthew perceived what he termed a 'fulfilment' of an old prophecy. He probably intended thereby merely to direct attention to the exactness of the agreement. 'All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by (or, through) the prophet saying,

I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.'

The only passage found is in the Psalms:

73 Ps. 2

'I will open my month in a parable;

I will utter dark sayings of old.'

There is some uncertainty about Matthew's quotation. The Sinaitic MS. had 'Esaias the prophet,' but the word has been struck out by a later hand, together with the words 'of the world,' which do not appear in the Vatican MS.

In this portion of the narrative Mark inserts a parable which is omitted by the other evangelists. 'And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how.' Man must do his part, but it is limited; the growth of divine truth in the world depends upon its innate vitality, and upon the workings of divine providence. Man's sphere of action lies within narrow range; he must sleep by night, he must work by day; and while he pursues his appointed course of duty, the results of past activities are developing and maturing, in ways unseen and inexplicable. Sudden transformations are not to be looked for either in the natural or spiritual world. The order of nature provides for the gradual evolution of material products, and the same law holds good with respect to spiritual developments. 'The earth beareth (or, yieldeth) fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.' Human labour is chiefly needed at the beginning and end of the process: first the sowing, last the reaping. 'But when the fruit is ripe (or, alloweth), straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.'

„ 28

„ 29

13 Mat. 36

From Matthew's gospel it appears that the parables grouped together in this part of the narrative were not delivered as one discourse. First was the parable of the sower, followed by an explanation of it in private; then various other parables were spoken in public, after which Jesus dismissed his hearers and went home. The Authorised Version stands thus: 'Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house.' With that Tischendorf, Alford and Young agree, and the only variation in the oldest manuscripts is that the Sinaitic and Vatican have 'Then he sent' instead of 'Then Jesus sent.' But the Revisers render the passage thus: 'Then he left the multitudes, and went into the house;' the idea of dismissal is put out of sight, as though Jesus had simply retired, leaving his hearers to wait for him or not, as they chose. Luther's version brings out the fact of the dismissal emphatically: 'Da liess Jesus das Volk von sich, und kam heim.'

„ 36

With respect to one of the parables the disciples sought an explanation from Jesus. 'And his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field.' Thereupon Jesus gave



them a full and precise interpretation of each simile in the parable : who the sower was, what the field represented, who were symbolized by the good seed, the tares, the enemy, what the harvest signified, and who would be the reapers. 'And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man ; and the field is the world ; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom ; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one* ; and the harvest is the end of the world (or, the consummation of the age) ; and the reapers are angels.' This exactitude of interpretation could not properly have been ventured upon by us had it not been given by Jesus himself. In a complex illustration of this kind, only the Speaker can be fully cognizant of what ideas in his own mind are set forth by each particular point of the parable. In the absence of explanation, we can only presume to deduce from it some general and salient truths ; and even in doing so, we are likely to misconceive, in some points, the real sense of the parable ; for each man must interpret it, as he interprets all the teachings of Nature, according to the degree of light within him, and the conceptions which are habitual to his mind. The very first inference we draw from the parable is likely to be erroneous. We should be apt to take the 'field' as representing the 'Church,' whereas Jesus tells us it represents the 'world.' Alford argues, verbally, that it is the 'world,' because Jesus says so ; but this admission, as soon as made, is counteracted by what follows : 'If understood of the Church, then the Church only as *commensurate with the world* . . . The Church standing for the world, not the world for the Church . . . After all, the world *is the Church*, only overrun by these very tares.' But even taking the 'field' to signify the 'world,' and the world to mean the world, we should naturally imagine that the owner of the field who sowed it with good seed must represent God, who is the owner of the world. But that was not the idea in the mind of Jesus ; he interprets it as applying to man, not to God : 'He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.' True, that was the title he had chosen as specially his own, but it is one which places him on the level of mankind, their foremost representative, but not one whit in nature above his brethren. Had Jesus wished to speak of himself here as superior to men, or as representative of God, he could have taken the title, which others did not hesitate to give him, of 'Son of God ;' but he represents himself as sowing good seed as other men can sow it ; the seed is from God, who has given us both it and the world, and both then and now 'he that soweth the good seed is the son of man.'

'And the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom ; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one*.' The gradual development of men's characters and lives divides them into good and evil ; the expressions 'sons of the kingdom,' and 'sons of the evil *one*,' are obviously not indicative of origin but of place and disposition : the former submit themselves to the laws of the kingdom, the latter yield themselves to evil. The term 'sons' was used as equivalent to 'disciples : ' as when Jesus asked the Pharisees, 'By whom do your sons cast them out ? ' which Alford explains to mean 'scholars, disciples,' and refers to the same use of the word, 'sons of the prophets' in 2 Kings ii. 3, and elsewhere. In the same way we must understand the words, 'And the enemy that sowed them is the devil.' They are his 'sons'

13 Mat. 37-39

12 Mat. 27

in the sense of being his 'disciples' or 'followers,' and he is their 'father' in the sense only of being their 'teacher' or 'leader.' The most stringent literalist would not venture to assume the doctrine that some of us are sent into the world by God and others by the devil.

'And the enemy that sowed them is the devil.'

The American Committee of Revisers made the following suggestion: 'Substitute for "devil" ("devils") the word "demon" ("demons") wherever the latter word is given in the margin (or represents the Greek words *daimōn*, *daimonion*). There is another Greek word (*diabolos*) which is also rendered 'devil,' except in three passages: 'Women in like manner grave, not *slanderers*'; 'implacable, slanderers'; 'not slanderers': the word rendered 'slanderers' is literally 'devils,' *diabolos* being defined in the Greek Lexicon as 'falsely accusing, slanderous, calumnious.' In the other 34 passages in which the word *diabolos* is rendered 'devil,' the Revisers make no note in the margin. But in the 59 passages in which *daimōn* or *daimonion* is rendered 'devil,' and in one passage in which it is rendered 'god,' they invariably insert the Greek word in the margin. That is a great improvement on the Authorised Version, and if the word *diabolos* were translated *slanderer* or *accuser* instead of 'devil,' English readers would have a further advantage.

In the passage before us, Jesus does not represent the devil (*diabolos*) as creating the seed, but merely as sowing it. Only by yielding to his suggestions and influence do men become his 'sons'; and it is enough for his purpose to infuse evil into their minds, leaving it thenceforth to its natural development. We are here on the border-land of a great mystery, which can be trodden by no human foot, and concerning which it becomes us not to speak with any certainty of personal conviction. If Jesus spoke plainly, it was because he knew fully: we have not his knowledge, and albeit we ponder, with all reverence, what he said, it becomes us not to re-echo his words and apply them to our own time and circumstances. He represents the enemy as sowing tares in passing, after which he 'went away.' We have a mysterious but graphic description of the temptation of Jesus by the devil (*diabolos*); we find Jesus frequently endorsing the popular belief then current with respect to demoniacal possession, speaking to demons, casting them out, enforcing them to silence, suffering them on one occasion to enter a herd of swine; but admitting such realities of spiritual existence to have been then revealed as by a lightning flash from heaven, we have no corresponding experiences now, and so long have they been absent, or unrecognized, that the man who should talk now about demoniacal possession would run the risk of finding himself in a lunatic asylum. The cases of mental aberration to be seen there, in every degree of intensity, from helpless idiocy up to raging madness, do, indeed, show much resemblance to what was once held to be demoniacal possession, but that idea has been long discarded by the scientific mind: and wisely so in the absence of corroborative evidence. It would seem to have been quite enough for the devil to plant the germs of evil centuries ago; they have gone on developing, ripening, fructifying, and nothing is more obvious than that the good and evil in the world must continue to grow together until separated by more than human power and

3 i. Tim. 11

3 ii. Tim. 3

2 Tit. 3

17 Acts 18

wisdom. That is what Jesus taught us to expect : ' the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are angels.'

Finding in verse 38 the expression, ' the field is the world,' and in verse 39 the expression, ' the harvest is the end of the world,' we should naturally suppose the word ' world ' in the original to be the same in both places. But Young's literal version shows the distinction between them ; ' the field is the world . . . the harvest is the end of the age.' There is no indication of this, however, either in the Authorised Version, Tischendorf or Alford, although Samuel Sharpe's translation agrees with that of Young. The Revisers also appear to have shrunk from making the necessary alteration in the text, but they have put into the margin, as an alternative rendering, ' or, the consummation of the age.' The expression ' the end of the world ' has naturally been interpreted as denoting some great, overwhelming, final earthly catastrophe. There are passages elsewhere in Scripture relating to the burning up of the world, but this end or consummation of the age has properly no connection with them. It denotes simply the period when, in the course of natural, inevitable development, human life and character have reached a fixed standard of maturity, imperatively involving the necessity of separating the bad from the good. That is a task beyond the reach of human discernment, and Jesus represents it as a trust confided to beings of a higher order : ' the reapers are angels.'

In Young's literal version the word ' angels ' is here and elsewhere rendered ' messengers.' The alteration is an important one, for the title indicates that the Beings alluded to are engaged in carrying out the divine purposes. A ' messenger ' is one entrusted with a mission, whose only aim must be to accomplish the will of the Sender. What that is, Jesus explains clearly : ' As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire ; so shall it be in the end of the world (or, the consummation of the age).' The period thus indicated must be interpreted according to the simile with which it is connected. The ' end of the age ' denotes the time of the grain's maturity. Jesus spoke but of one sowing and of one reaping : did he mean that there was only one ? or was the one intended to be an illustration of the many ? There is no reason for assuming that the parable was designed to represent and include, as in one view, the whole history of the human race, from Adam to the last man, from the first dawn of creation to some indefinitely remote period of final, universal, simultaneous judgment. On the contrary, the fact that the sowing was by ' the Son of man ' indicates that the parable deals with the gradual development of human history ; and the illustration, being borrowed from nature, must be interpreted according to the course of nature. We cannot venture to say that the period is confined to the earthly life of each successive generation, for multitudes die before maturity, and there is no ground for the assumption that the soul's development is checked by the change of state attendant upon what we term ' death ; ' but we may say, with certainty, that each generation must mature in its due succession ; and inasmuch as Jesus introduces the office of the ' messengers ' at the time of maturity, their work of judgment and separation must be, if not continuous, at least recurrent, ever going forward, but in a world beyond our ken,



and of which, apart from the revelations of Scripture, we should have remained in utter ignorance.

Jesus dwells on the gathering and burning of the tares as the chief point in the parable. Like the sowing at the first, he represents the reaping as the act of humanity. 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels.' Jesus gives no indication that the title 'Son of man' is to be restricted to himself; but even were it so, it must belong to him as the head and chief representative of mankind; the work of reformation will be accomplished by human agency; replacing the word 'angels' by the proper word 'messengers,' the scope of the passage becomes more apparent. There will come a time of active supervision, investigation, judgment, reform: 'messengers' specially appointed and fitted for the task will be commissioned, authorised, empowered to search out and utterly exterminate all causes of offence, and all who lead evil lives. 'And they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity.' The simile of the binding into bundles and burning of the tares was in no point too strong; Jesus shrunk not from its fullest and most rigorous application: 'and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.' It is contrary to common sense, however, to regard this, or any other simile, as anything more than a simile: we must not confound the illustration with the thing it serves to illustrate. In many figurative ways Jesus set forth the doctrine of final retribution; and it would be as absurd to interpret any one of them literally, as it would be to say that when John the Baptist declared: 'Even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire,' he meant us to understand that the doom of the wicked was to be first beheaded and then burnt! Such figures of speech abound: 'He will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.' 'The sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 'And they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away.' 'It is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire.' 'His lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors . . . So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you.' 'He that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.' 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 'Shall cut him asunder (or, severely scourge him), and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.' All such passages are obviously figurative, and the momentous truths and realities they are designed to teach elude our grasp whenever an attempt is made to treat as literal that which is allegorical. 'With many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it: and without a parable spake he not unto them.' In the strongest manner imaginable Jesus sets forth the ultimate overthrow and punishment of moral evil, and the bitter, hopeless sorrow which must come upon transgressors at the last. 'There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.' How often did he reiterate that solemn warning! He never pictures, as we might have expected him to do, the gradual growth



and mastery of good over evil by the inherent, transforming power of virtue ; but he speaks here and elsewhere of the forcible ejection of evil from the kingdom of God : the regeneration of society is to be secured by the absolute and entire separation of good from bad. That is the object aimed at by the criminal judicature which has grown up in every civilized community ; and in a higher state of social existence we are taught to expect the triumph of right over wrong by the same method of repressive and protective justice. When the final purgation of society has been thus accomplished, there will emanate from its members the lustre of a moral rectitude as bright and far-reaching as that of the sun itself. 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' The kingdom of the 'Son of man' (verse 41) is here identified with the kingdom of God the 'Father.' In the teaching of Jesus the word Father has a well-defined meaning. He did not admit that God was Father to all men, by his mere creative and upholding power. God is our Father as Christ is our Teacher, only in proportion as we learn his will and obey his leading. When certain unbelieving Jews said to Jesus : 'We have one Father—God,' he replied : 'If God were your Father ye would love me : for I came forth and am come from God ;' and then he told them plainly : 'Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do.' The same idea appears to have been in the mind of the apostle Paul when he styled God 'the Father of spirits (or, our spirits) ;' not of the natural man, the body and soul derived from Adam, but of the spirit impressed with God's own likeness. Other passages lead to the same conclusion : 'We received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God.' 'If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his :' by parity of reasoning, If any man hath not the spirit of God, he is none of his—God is not his Father. This is connected with the doctrine of regeneration : 'As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even* to them that believe on his name : which were born (or, begotten), not of blood (Gr. bloods), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one.' The true disciples of Jesus have what the apostle Paul calls, 'the firstfruits of the spirit.' 'Ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.'

13 Mat. 43

8 John 41

12 Heb. 9

2 i. Cor. 12

8 Rom. 9

1 John 12, 13

5 i. John 14

8 Rom. 23

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Jesus teaches us to expect a perfect state of society, from which all evil things and persons will be rigorously excluded ; and he sets before us the bliss and glory of the whole community, not of particular individuals : 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.' He was anxious that these solemn truths should be pondered by all, and not by a favoured few only. Education and culture were not essential to their comprehension, but simply a right use of the natural faculties : 'He that hath ears, let him hear.'

3 Mat. 43

Matthew now records three parables which are not given by the other evangelists.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in the field ; which a man found, and hid ; and in his joy (or, for joy thereof) he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.' Young's translation here and elsewhere of 'the kingdom of heaven' as 'the reign of the heavens' brings clearly to the mind the nature of the

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thing spoken of : a ruling of the earthly life by heavenly laws. This most desirable state of heart and life is here compared to a treasure, surpassing in value all else that a man possesses. It lies buried in a field, its very existence unknown to the heedless crowds who pass by and over it. The man who becomes aware of it is represented, in his anxiety to secure it for himself, as locking the secret in his own bosom. He is overjoyed to think that such a prize lies within his grasp, and in order to obtain it he scruples not to realize whatever property he has, that he may be able to buy that field at the price at which it is offered by the owner. No question arises as to the morality of the action ; it is assumed that the price was duly published, that the purchaser was justified in buying, and that the vendor had either no wish or no right to alter his terms. The Jewish law conveyed the treasure with the field, and to the discoverer of the treasure justly belonged the advantage of the discovery. But all this is extrinsic to the scope of the parable, which brings out the following points. (1) That the kingdom of heaven is a treasure. (2) A hidden treasure, lying within the reach of men's knowledge, but disregarded because unknown. (3) That it may be discovered by diligent search. (4) That the discovery must be a matter for personal rejoicing. (5) That the treasure can be obtained only at the cost of parting with everything else.

73 Mat. 45, 46

The same ideas are brought out in the next parable. 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls : and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' A pearl-merchant, dealing in nothing but pearls, and those of the highest value. The former parable represented a man in the act of selling and buying : 'he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.' This parable represents the merchant as having actually sold and bought. This is brought out more clearly in Young's version : 'having gone, hath sold all that he had, and bought it.' The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read, 'but when he had found,' instead of 'and having found.' We have therefore to contemplate a man who has made it the business of his life to acquire, regardless of cost, the most beautiful and precious pearls obtainable. His search had resulted in finding and securing the best specimens ; but when he came across one pearl of surpassing lustre, he parted with everything he had in order to possess it. Here, as in the previous parable, everything is represented as relinquished for the kingdom of heaven's sake. What does this mean ? Not that we must give up earthly blessings, in order to obtain hereafter the kingdom of heaven ; not that we must strip ourselves of material comforts, for our soul's welfare : such ideas are often broached, and in exceptional instances of self-deceptive religious enthusiasm have been acted upon, but they are for the most part theoretical, mere oratorical flourishes in pulpit discourses ; no healthy mind ever assimilates them, or seeks to put them into practice. The man who professes to despise earthly comforts, and deems himself better without them : how can he, with any show of reason, impart them to others ? The duty of almsgiving must be based upon the due appreciation of the good things of this life : because they are good for all we are urged to impart them to those who have need.

We gain a true conception of the import of the parable by con-

sidering Young's literal rendering, 'the reign of the heavens.' That signifies the divine government of each man's heart and life. Various systems of ethics have been sought out by philosophic minds, and moulded into codes of morality for human guidance; many forms of religious belief and practice are prevalent: all these are deservedly regarded as 'goodly pearls,' and here and there an exploring, truth-seeking mind has gathered to itself whatever, on closest scrutiny, was deemed most precious; but Jesus' teaching of the 'reign of the heavens' excels all other creeds and doctrines, and the man who has gained that rule of life, that ground of hope, that counsel of perfection, that gospel of salvation, needs nothing else, craves nothing higher, renounces everything of inferior value, and being of the same mind as the apostle can take up his words: 'Yea <sup>3 Phil. 8</sup> verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung (or, refuse), that I may gain Christ, and be found in him.'

The next simile presents the matter under a different aspect. 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net (Gr. drag-net), <sup>13 Mat. 47</sup> that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.' Just as the field was open to the reception of any kind of seed, so the net was open to collect any kind of fish. And as the field represented the world, so does the net: all classes and characters are found in it. Alford, however, says: 'This net is the *Church gathering from the sea* (a common Scripture similitude for nations) *of the world, all kinds.*' That is a misapplication of the proper, Scriptural idea of 'the Church.' The word 'church' occurs 71 times in the Authorised Version; in every instance it is rendered by Young, 'assembly,' and signifies the assembly of believers. The Greek word is *ecclesia*, which is defined: 'an assembly of the citizens summoned by the crier, the legislative assembly,' the definition 'the Church' being altogether secondary. In three passages it is properly translated: 'the *assembly* was in confusion;' 'it shall be settled in the regular *assembly*;' 'he dismissed the *assembly*.' The converts in any particular place formed the assembly in that place. It is important to clear our minds from the confusion of thought which prevails on this point. The 'Church' is the 'assembly' of professed believers: therefore if any believers are excluded, the word 'Church' does not apply. The 'Church of England' is not a 'Church,' in the Scriptural sense, because dissenters are excluded; it is a part of the Church, the dissenters forming the other part. So, when 'the Church' is spoken of as an institution, the speaker is dealing with something which has no correspondence with the Scriptural idea of 'the Church;' whenever 'the Church' is personified, styled 'she,' or 'her children' are talked about, the assertions and arguments may be dismissed as irrelevant; they are out of harmony with apostolic views, quite as much as the still greater degradation put upon the word 'Church' by applying it to a sacred edifice. The modernised signification of 'the Church' has no relation whatever to the Scriptural sense of it; and as a needful and salutary test of truth, it will be well for us, whenever 'the Church' is mentioned, to replace it mentally by the word 'assembly;' if that word will not adapt itself to the speaker's view, either he is talking nonsense, or talking of



a 'Church' which was never alluded to by Christ and his apostles. Therefore the metaphor of the drag-net cannot properly be applied to the 'Church:' the net is that which collects; the Church is that which is collected, an Assembly.

13 Mat. 48

The simile is continued thus: 'which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach.' Between the casting and the drawing-in of the net, a certain period must elapse. This would seem to symbolise the successive generations of mankind. As each accomplishes its term, it is drawn up out of the deep sea of human history to enter upon another condition of being. To assume only one casting-forth and drawing-up of the net, would be doing violence to the parable. 'And they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away.' Such scenes were of daily occurrence: the casting forth of the nets, the more or less rapid filling of them, the hauling to shore, the fishermen handling each fish, preserving the good and rejecting the bad. The process of selection followed immediately upon the hauling-in of the netful: the idea could not arise, that this represented the very opposite case of a whole season's fishing being completed before the selection was attempted. The same train of thought is suggested by the parable of the tares of the field. A crop is sown: not until it reaches maturity is any selection attempted, but as soon as the time of harvest comes judgment is exercised and a separation takes place. It would contradict the parable to suppose that many crops in succession must be gathered before the separation can occur. And in applying the parable to mankind Jesus places the judgment at the period of maturity, at 'the consummation of the age.' But for a misleading translation, none would have imagined that the judgment of each generation was to be delayed until the 'end of the world'—assumed to be the 'destruction of the world'—takes place at some indefinitely remote period. Beza's Latin version is clear: '*in consummatione seculi hujus.*' That phrase is again adopted by Jesus in interpreting the dealing of the fishermen with the fish; he repeats what he said about the tares and wheat, as needing no better form of words or imagery to express his meaning. 'So shall it be in the end of the world (or, the consummation of the age): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.' The question here arises: Why did Jesus revert to the conclusion of the previous parable, instead of adhering to the illustration of the fishermen and their fish. The bad fish were said to be simply 'cast away;' Young's rendering is even less strong: 'the bad they cast out.' It would seem that on that point the simile was too weak to convey the idea which Jesus was anxious to impress. He would not have it supposed that wickedness was a thing to be lightly dealt with, merely cast aside with contemptuous indifference when the time of judgment came. His former simile brought out clearly the unsparing severity necessarily attendant upon the annihilation of evil, and to that he preferred to adhere. But the simile, though repeated, does not cease to be a simile. Alford says: 'Compare the mere "cast away" of the one, with the fearful antitype of vv. 49, 50;' and his explanation is, that the angels 'shall gather out the wicked from among the just, and cast them into everlasting punishment.' To say the least, the men-

„ 48

„ 49, 50



tion of 'everlasting punishment' is here out of place. When the expression occurs in the teaching of Jesus it must be dealt with in connection with the context; but in these parables the idea of punishment is altogether subsidiary: the tares could not be burnt, nor the bad fish cast away, with the intention of punishing them. We must not attempt to literalise the symbolic teaching of Jesus. The solemn lesson here inculcated is—the inevitable and enforced separation of the wicked from the righteous, the purging away of evil as by a fiery furnace, and the bitter grief which must come upon all who have to be thus dealt with. The judgment will not be delayed beyond its appointed period, 'the consummation of the age;' it will be under the control of a human Being, 'the Son of man,' and exercised by his 'messengers.' Every one must attain to a maturity of perfection or of imperfection, of rectitude or of iniquity. When the last stage is reached there will come the crisis of man's destiny; his character will be unerringly appraised, and his proper place assigned. In comparison with the overwhelming importance of this final adjudication, all else in human history dwindles into insignificance. The measure of success and failure in our earthly life, the gain or loss of fame or fortune, the joy of possession and the sorrow of bereavement, these things are of small importance except as they influence the formation of character. The ultimate question will be, not what we have gained of wealth or knowledge, but what we have become; not what we have, but what we are.

Mark and Luke insert in this part of the narrative a simile which is not given, in this connection, by Matthew. 'And he said unto them, Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, *and* not to be put on the stand?' This is somewhat altered and amplified in Luke. 'And no man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but putteth it on a stand, that they which enter in may see the light.' When anything is done with a set purpose, it is irrational to allow or do anything in opposition to that purpose. The lighting and bringing-in of a lamp must indicate that the lamp-stand is the proper place for it. For a short time it may dazzle eyes accustomed to the twilight, but it is not therefore covered over. Jesus applies this to his own teaching. 'For nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor *anything* secret, that shall not be known and come to light.' In Mark a different turn is given to the words. 'For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was *anything* made secret, but that it should come to light.' The Authorised Version here is: 'For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested,' and Alford observes: 'The rendering is in some uncertainty. That of the Vatican MS. and the Sinaitic, which seems the best, is, "except that it should be manifested."' The Revisers have adopted that, agreeing with Tischendorf, whose Tauchnitz edition, however, does not indicate the divergence in the two oldest MSS. which is noted by Alford. The meaning seems to be this: That the analogies and similitudes disclosed by Jesus between earthly and heavenly things, were not intended to be permanently obscured and hidden from the eyes of men; and when he brought light to bear upon them, that light should be welcomed, brought into prominence, and made use of for further investigation. This accords with what follows.

Mark 23, 24 'If any man hath ears to hear let him hear. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear.' The sense of the passage appears to be : 'Take heed to what ye hear ;' for Jesus was not warning against false doctrine, but speaking of his own. Luke so understood and rendered it : 'Take heed therefore how ye hear.' The degree of their attention would be the measure of their acquirement, and one gain in knowledge would lead on to another : 'With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you : and more shall be given unto you.' It might be laid down as a general law that the possession of knowledge leads to increase of knowledge ; and that where there is lack of mental grasp and activity, with its accompanying advance, there will be loss and retrogression. 'For he that hath, to him shall be given : and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.' Luke tones down the concluding words, making them, 'even that which he thinketh he hath (or, seemeth to have).'

We are told by Mark that the recorded parables are samples only of many delivered by Jesus. It was his only style of teaching, and brief as such addresses were, he was careful to time them to the exigencies of his hearers. 'And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it : and without a parable spake he not unto them.' But to the smaller circle of hearers who were bound to him by the tie of confessed discipleship, he was careful to explain the meaning of his parables. 'But privately to his own disciples he expounded all things.' The anxiety of Jesus that they should understand everything is evident from his question recorded by Matthew : 'Have ye understood all these things ? They say unto him, Yea.' The Revisers have made two omissions here, corresponding with the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., namely the words 'Jesus said unto them,' before the question, and the word 'Lord' after 'yea.' It is not easy to understand for what reason any copyist would have taken upon himself to insert 'Lord,' and it may have come down from some original record ; but there is no significance attaching either to the insertion or omission of the word, which was nothing more than an ordinary term of respect, which might be applied to any Teacher. Young's translation is, 'Yes, sir.'

Having received that assurance Jesus, still speaking in figurative language, pointed out the advantage to be derived from such acquisitions of knowledge. 'And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder.' Alford explains that the word 'Therefore' is 'an expression of *consequence*, but not a strong one : answering to our Well, then.' The Revisers give the Greek form of expression, 'hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven,' which Young renders by its English equivalent, 'having been instructed as to the reign of the heavens.' A comprehension of the analogies subsisting between things natural and things spiritual, the habit of discerning in earthly experiences and concerns patterns of divine rulership with respect to heavenly matters, this is real knowledge, that is, a knowledge of realities ; and the storing of it in our minds places at our command supplies of thought, and motives of action, and incentives to duty, sufficient for our utmost needs : 'like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his

treasures things new and old.' A mind well furnished with heavenly lore is able to meet every exigency as it arises.

While Jesus was delivering his parables to the people, he was interrupted by a visit from his own family. Possibly some urgent domestic matter was the reason of their seeking an interview with him ; possibly their time was limited ; possibly they came with the view of inducing him to cease his missionary labours, for Mark states that at an earlier period his 'friends' mistook his enthusiasm for madness, <sup>3 Mark 21</sup> and sought to restrain him by force. Whatever the cause, his relatives were now anxious to see and talk with him immediately ; but they found it impossible, being on the outskirts of the crowd of which he was the centre, to attract his notice. 'And there come his mother and his brethren ; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him.' <sup>51</sup> Matthew tells us that he was at the time addressing the people. 'While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, <sup>12 Mat. 46</sup> his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him ;' and Luke brings out the fact that they were unable to get near him, <sup>8 Luke 19</sup> owing to the crowd. 'And there came to him his mother and brethren, and they could not come at him for the crowd.' There is a substantial agreement between the three evangelists, but with some curious minor discrepancies in the ancient MSS. Matthew's narrative continues thus : 'And one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee.' <sup>12 Mat. 47</sup> The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. omit the whole verse. In the former it had been struck out by a later hand, and in lieu thereof appears, 'Then said one of his disciples, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.' Jesus seized upon the words, and in his impassioned, figurative style applied them to those about him. 'But he answered <sup>58</sup> and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother ? and who are my brethren ?' Who claimed relationship with him, and with whom would he acknowledge a relationship ? Then, 'looking round on <sup>3 Mark 34</sup> them which sat round about him . . . he stretched forth his hand <sup>12 Mat. 49</sup> towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren.' Thus, with fervid look and eloquent gesture, he conveyed the spiritual lesson, that the grand, sole aim of all his teaching was to place his followers on the same level of obedience to the Divine will which he himself aspired to. That was the only tie which could bind his disciples to himself, and the closest of family ties might be taken as its appropriate symbol. 'For whosoever shall do the will of my <sup>50</sup> Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Luke's account is briefer and less vivid, and the saying as handed down to and by him differs somewhat. 'But he answered and said <sup>8 Luke 21</sup> unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.'

Matthew tells us : 'And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished <sup>13 Mat. 53</sup> these parables, he departed thence.' Mark records as follows. 'And <sup>4 Mark 35, 36</sup> on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side. And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat.' The expression 'even as he was' seems to imply a hurried departure, without allowing time for rest or refreshment, or providing night-apparel for the journey. Luke got hold of the main facts of this voyage, but does not appear to have been certain about the time of it. He says : 'Now it came to pass <sup>8 Luke 22</sup>



on one of those days, that he entered into a boat, himself and his disciples ; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake ; and they launched forth.' In the piecing together of Matthew's gospel this voyage seems to have been misplaced ; for it is related in the 8th chapter, whereas the parables are given in the 13th chapter. He says : 'Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.' This coincides with Mark's observation about 'leaving the multitude,' and his 'let us go over unto the other side' is equivalent to Matthew's 'he gave commandment to depart unto the other side' : they agree that the journey was undertaken at the desire of Jesus. Matthew represents him as foremost in entering the vessel : 'and when he was entered into a boat, his disciples followed him.' Possibly some hesitation on their part may have arisen from indications of a coming storm. Mark states : 'and other boats were with him' : the words 'with him' may be taken to indicate that the only object of their sailing was to follow Jesus wherever he might go. A violent storm came on ; the waves not only tossed the vessel, but were washing over and gradually covering the deck. 'And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the boat was covered with the waves.' Mark describes the situation as precarious. 'And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling.' Luke says : 'And there came down a storm of wind on the lake ; and they were filling *with water*, and were in jeopardy.' The Revisers have retained the italicised words 'with water,' but their insertion was superfluous. Young's rendering is sufficiently clear : 'they were filling, and were in peril.' Worn out by the labours of the day, Jesus was sleeping on the deck. 'But as they sailed he fell asleep.' Mark notes his exact position. 'And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.' The disciples could no longer leave him thus quiescent and unconscious amid the turmoil. They roused him from slumber, and made him aware of the danger in which they all stood. 'And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish.' Overcome by fatigue, there was probably some difficulty in making him realise the situation. Mark's words are such as might be addressed to one half dazed and indifferent. 'And they awake him, and say unto him, Master (or, Teacher), carest thou not that we perish ?' Matthew intimates that their appeal to him showed a reliance upon him to extricate them from the peril. 'And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Save, Lord, we perish.' Inasmuch as Young also here gives the word as 'Lord,' and it is not Master or Teacher as in Mark, it would seem to have been intended as a title of extraordinary respect. Alford makes the following observations : 'On these and such like variations, notice the following excellent and important remarks of Augustine : "The sense of the disciples waking the Lord and seeking to be saved, is one and the same : nor is it worth while to enquire which of these three was really said to Christ. For whether they said any one of these three, or other words which no one of the Evangelists has mentioned, but of similar import as to the truth of the sense, what matters it ?" We may wish that he had always spoken thus. Much useless labour might have been spared, and men's minds led into the diligent enquiry of the real difficulties of

S Mat. 18

,, 23

4 Mark 36

S Mat. 24

4 Mark 37

S Luke 23

,, 23

4 Mark 38

S Luke 24

4 Mark 38

S Mat. 25



the Gospels, instead of so many spending time in knitting cobwebs. But Augustine himself in the very next sentence, descends to the unsatisfactory ground of the Harmonists, when he adds, "Though it may be also that when many were calling upon Him, all these may have been said, one by one, another by another." This remark of Augustine commends itself to every impartial mind, and Alford's strictures thereon are unmerited. The sayings recorded by the evangelists must have been either heard by or handed down to them. Were we to assume that they invented them, all faith in their accuracy as historians would be at an end. This remark applies equally to Luke, who, acknowledging himself to be a compiler had, of course, in many points to exercise his own judgment in that capacity.

When Jesus was sufficiently awakened to realize the position, the only anxiety he showed was to check the terror and dismay exhibited by his disciples. 'And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' Had they not just told him that they feared for their lives? Did he not see that they were in danger of drowning? Yes: but in face of all that he puts the question, 'Why are ye fearful?' Why this abject fear of death? He saw nothing in the situation for faithful souls to tremble at. A greater faith would have removed all fear. The peril of the moment had served to reveal in all of them that deficiency of confidence which shrinks from any new experience. As one might say to a child who dreads something which has no power to harm, or who shrinks from stepping into a darkened avenue, Jesus says to his disciples quailing at the thought of having to face death, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' The meaning cannot be that they should have been confident the vessel could not sink with him therein, nor they drown while with him, for there was nothing to justify or give rise to such an idea. But what they could not have expected or imagined, he was able to do, and did. 'Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.' Mark gives part of his words: 'And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.' Luke seems to put in his own language the account handed down to him: 'And he awoke, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.' We are lost in wonder when we attempt to realize the scene. It has no counterpart in human history, and is as strange and unaccountable as those tales of magic and enchantment which belong to the domain of fiction. We have no experience of any connection between human volition and material nature; no idea how what we term dead matter can be influenced by man's will. We know that soul acts upon soul. We know that the soul can act upon the body. We have reason to believe that the soul of one can act upon the body of another. The soul of a dog is ruled by the word or glance of its master, and the bodily movements of the dog are swayed accordingly. Is there some lower kind of soul in things we term inanimate, making them subject to the will of one who can so penetrate their nature as to bring it into correspondence with himself? The rushing wind and the heaving water are influenced by sun and moon; we discern and define the powers of attraction and gravitation, but they are too subtle for our comprehension. We can but say, after all, the moon

8 Mat. 26

,, 26

4 Mark 39

8 Luke 24

8 Mat. 27

4 Mark 41

8 Luke 25

33 Psa. 9

approaches the waters, and they leap ; just as the evangelists say that Jesus spoke to them, and they were hushed. The amazement of the disciples was unbounded. They could only gaze, awe-struck, at Jesus, and discuss with bated breath such an incomprehensible display of supernatural power. ‘And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?’ Matthew thus describes their wonder. Mark tells of their awe. ‘And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’ Luke notes both the dread and the astonishment. ‘And being afraid they marvelled, saying one to another, Who then is this, that he commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey him?’ The account is perfectly natural. We, reading it, say at once, How could it have been? The disciples, seeing it with their own eyes, confine themselves to the question, Who can this be who has done it? And their question proves that at that time they had no fixed notions as to the nature of the personality of Jesus. They did not say, as many say now, He could do it, because he is God. They did not even recognize in him any supernatural character, but simply discussed among themselves, ‘What manner of man is this?’ Our knowledge with respect to Jesus exceeds that which they had at the time; for we have the advantage of referring to early records about his birth and antecedents, of which the disciples probably then knew little or nothing, and we are accustomed to consider subsequent incidents in his marvellous career, which had not then happened. We can well believe that one whose birth was brought about miraculously, whose coming forth was heralded by angels, whose prior existence is declared to have dated back to remote abysses of time, and to have been marked by divine creative powers, was endowed, while sojourning on earth, with mysterious and inexplicable attributes, with a superhuman knowledge which centuries of scientific research could not attain, and with a mastery over the material world which to us equally with its first beholders must appear astounding, and to many of us, not having beheld, either almost or altogether incredible. He must be a bold man, and foolish, who would take upon himself to say that there is no Being, no ‘God’ in the universe, to whom the elements are subject, and of whom it may be said, as by the Psalmist, ‘He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.’ The order and harmony of the universe involve the existence of a regulating and controlling Mind, the subjugation of Matter to Spirit, the power of a divine Will to work upon material things. That, surely, is not so hard of belief as is the assumption that inanimate and senseless matter can act upon inanimate and senseless matter. Here is a piece of iron lying on the ground; some distance from it there is a piece of rock. Unless brought together by outside force they must lie apart for ever. A human hand may bring them into contact, but no human voice, however strong the volition of the speaker, could do so. But in a certain kind of ore there dwells an innate, mysterious power which can do what no other thing and no living man can do; and in which that power is so intense and superabundant that it can be imparted to a piece of metal by mere friction of the two. And now, if you place the magnet where the rock was, you will see the iron leap towards it like a thing of life.

That which the most philosophic mind would have pronounced impossible, and the most truth-loving mind have declared incredible, experience can demonstrate to be both possible and credible. And if that can be with respect to inanimate matter, how much more with respect to the power recorded to have been exhibited by a man who lived as a prince among men, and whose teaching and history have claimed the homage of mankind for nearly two thousand years ! We assert that in the loadstone there reside occult powers of attraction and repulsion, because we have seen them act. The disciples assert that Jesus by his voice could hush the wind and smooth the sea, because they saw him do it. Both assertions rest upon human testimony ; we can satisfy ourselves by experiment as to the one, and our certainty as to that corroborates the credibility of the other. Having the history, let us be careful to take it as we find it. The three evangelists agree in the statement that Jesus ‘rebuked’ the wind and the sea : the wind first, that being the cause, and then ‘the raging of the water,’ as the effect. This sounds very strange to us, as it must have done to those present ; but we must assume that there was good reason for the course adopted, and that the words spoken were not uttered needlessly, nor out of vain display.

We have followed Matthew’s narrative in assuming the remark of Jesus, ‘Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?’ to have been made before he stilled the tempest. But by the other evangelists it is placed after. In Mark we read : ‘And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful ? have ye not yet faith ?’ Luke puts it thus : ‘and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith ?’ Probably the account of Matthew, who was an eye witness, is the correct one. Alford says : ‘The author of this Gospel has been universally believed to be, the Apostle Matthew.’ Of Mark’s narrative he says : ‘It was universally believed in the ancient Church that Mark’s Gospel was written under the influence, and almost by the dictation of Peter.’ And further : ‘The testimony of the early Church was unanimous, that Matthew wrote *first* among the Evangelists.’ The accounts differ also as to the words spoken. Matthew : ‘O ye of little faith ;’ Mark : ‘Have ye not yet faith ?’ Luke : ‘Where is your faith ?’ But these recorded sayings all harmonise, in spite of minor differences, and regarding the gospels as historical documents such divergences are corroborative of their general truthfulness. Immediately, however, an attempt is made to claim supernatural inspiration for the writers, this conclusion must be reversed, and we are confronted by an array of formidable difficulties and inexplicable contradictions. The idea of an omniscient spirit guiding the mind of each evangelist is not consistent with uncertainties and discrepancies in their narratives.

‘And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.’ Luke has it : ‘And they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is over against Galilee.’ Alford notes that the literal translation of the word rendered ‘arrived’ is ‘sailed down to.’ Young, always reliable for punctilious accuracy, has, ‘And they sailed down to the region of the Gadarenes ;’ Tischendorf : ‘And they sailed to the country of the Gergasenes.’ Why the Revisers retained the word ‘arrived,’ does not appear.

There have always been considerable uncertainty and variance with



respect to the name of the country. The Revisers have inserted the note : ' Many ancient authorities read *Gergesenes* ; others *Gadarenes*. In Mark the original reading of the Sinaitic MS. was ' *Gerasenes*, ' altered by a later hand to ' *Gergesenes*, ' and in Matthew the original reading was ' *Gazarennes*, ' similarly altered.

Immediately on landing a sad spectacle presented itself : a raving madman issuing from the cemetery which he had made his home.

5 Mark 2 ' And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs.' He was not only beyond cure, but now altogether beyond restraint. On various occasions he had been captured, manacled and chained up like a wild animal, but in his paroxysms of raging fury his preternatural strength had sufficed to break the chains and smash the fetters. .. 3, 4 ' And no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain ; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces.' To tame this wild imbecile was admitted .. 4 to be a task beyond human power : ' and no man had strength to tame him.' In the Authorised Version this stands : ' neither could any one tame him ; ' and in Young : ' and none was able to tame him.' The poor maniac gave himself no rest. Day and night he was always wandering about, among the tombs and on the desolate hills ; he could be heard shouting, and was seen to cut his flesh with sharp stones. .. 5 ' And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones.' Luke adds that the disease was of long standing, and that he went 8 Luke 27 about in a state of perfect nudity. ' And when he was come forth upon the land, there met him a certain man out of the city, who had devils (Gr. demons) ; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, .. 29 and abode not in *any* house, but in the tombs . . . And he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters ; and breaking the bands asunder, he was driven of the devil (Gr. demon) into the deserts.' As soon as this unhappy creature caught sight of Jesus a marvellous change occurred. 5 Mark 6 ' And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him.' Whence this sudden identification of Jesus, as distinguished from his disciples ? Whence this eagerness to meet him, this impulse to do him homage ? The maniac proves himself superior to other men in power of discernment and intensity of reverence. He recognised in Jesus a superiority and divinity .. 7 of nature. ' And crying out with a loud voice he saith, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God ? ' Young renders this verbatim : ' What—to me and to thee, Jesus, Son of God the Most High ? ' It is the same expression as Jesus once addressed to his mother : ' Woman, what have I to do with thee ? ' 2 John 4 which is rendered by Young : ' What—to me and to thee, woman ? ' The words in both cases appear to be a protest or appeal against interference. The demoniac was in terror lest some punishment or painful judgment should be laid upon him, for he added : ' I adjure thee by God, torment me not,' which Young translates, ' I adjure thee by God, thou mayst not afflict me.' Luke gives simply the import of the appeal : ' I beseech thee, torment me not.' 8 Luke 28 The entreaty was extorted by a command which Jesus had addressed to 4 Mark 8 the demon within the man. ' For he said unto him, Come forth,



thou unclean spirit, out of the man.' Alford points out that the literal rendering is, 'For he *was saying* to him,' which is not indicated either by Young or Tischendorf; but Alford and Tischendorf agree in their rendering of Luke: 'For he was commanding the unclean spirit to come out from the man,' although there also Young renders the tense as in the Revised Version, 'For he commanded the unclean spirit to come out from the man.' The 'Englishman's Greek New Testament' corresponds with Alford's translation of both passages. It is clear that the dread of torture arose in connection with the departure commanded by Jesus, who thereupon put a strange question, and received a yet stranger answer. 'And he asked him, What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion; for we are many.' Jesus had recognised the existence in the man of an 'unclean spirit,' to whom he spoke, and by whom the answer was given. Luke confirms this, and explains the import of the reply. 'And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; for many devils (Gr. demons) were entered into him.' Let us now turn to Matthew's narrative. 'And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two possessed with devils (or, demoniacs) coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' This account is evidently independent. It supplies two additional facts: the stoppage of the way, and the question, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' But there is a serious discrepancy, two demoniacs appearing instead of one. Alford, with his usual candour and desire for truth, observes: 'Of the discrepancy itself, no solution has been proposed which can satisfy any really critical mind. That *one* should have been prominent, and the spokesman is of course *possible*, but such a hypothesis does not help us one whit. Where *two* healings take place, narrators do not commonly, being fully aware of this, relate in the singular: and this is the phenomenon to be accounted for. It is at least reasonable to assign accuracy in such a case to the more detailed and chronologically inserted accounts of St. Mark and St. Luke.'

Pursuing this extraordinary narrative, Mark says: 'And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.' Young renders it, 'out of the region.' Luke states this differently. 'And they intreated him that he would not command them to depart into the abyss,' which Young renders 'the deep.' Alford says the literal meaning is the abyss. It is the Greek adjective *abussos*, 'bottomless, unfathomable,' used substantively. Matthew does not mention this, but the three evangelists agree that there was a herd of swine feeding, and that the demons craved permission to enter into them. 'Now there was afar off from them a herd of many swine feeding. And the devils (Gr. demons) besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine.' 'Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding. And they besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.' 'Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they intreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them.' Matthew

- 8 Mat. 32 gives the one word spoken by Jesus in reply: 'And he said unto them, Go.' Mark and Luke simply notify the fact that his assent was given, both using the same words. 'And he gave them leave.'
- 5 Mark 13 Thereupon a strange thing happened. 'And they came out, and went into the swine: and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters.' Mark adds the approximate number of the swine. 'And the unclean spirits came out, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the sea, *in number* about two thousand; and they were choked in the sea.' Luke appears to have known nothing as to the number, and he puts 'lake' in the place of 'sea.' 'And the devils (Gr. demons) came out from the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake, and were choked.' What followed is related by Mark and Luke in almost identical words. 'And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city, and in the country.' 'And when they that fed them saw what had come to pass, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country.' Matthew intimates that in addition to their terror and distress of mind, they were conscious of the circumstances which led to the loss of the swine. 'And they that fed them fled, and went away into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to them that were possessed with devils (or, demoniacs).' Although it is stated that the herd of swine was 'afar off,' the approach of several strangers, and the colloquy with the demoniac would naturally have attracted to the scene those who had charge of the swine, and who could not apprehend any danger as likely to result from leaving them for a short time, especially as they were still in sight.
- 34 The strange story caused universal amazement and curiosity. 'And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus.' Mark enters more into detail. 'And they came to see what it was that had come to pass. And they come to Jesus, and behold him that was possessed with devils (or, the demoniac) sitting, clothed and in his right mind, *even* him that had the legion: and they were afraid.' Luke's account is almost word for word the same. 'And they went out to see what had come to pass; and they came to Jesus, and found the man, from whom the devils (Gr. demons) were gone out, sitting clothed and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus: and they were afraid.' The rumour which had attracted the crowd was now confirmed by the testimony of eye-witnesses. 'And they that saw it declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with devils (or, the demoniac), and concerning the swine.' The words used by Luke appear to be based on the same original document. 'And they that saw it told them how he that was possessed with devils (Gr. demons) was made whole (or, saved).'

In comparing together the narratives of the evangelists it is well to bear in mind that an entire harmony between them cannot be regarded as the most satisfactory evidence of the truth of the facts recorded: for it is probably owing to the writers having borrowed from one original manuscript, on the credibility and accuracy of which the correctness of the evangelists, in that case, depends. On the other hand, the discrepancies and omissions observable in the Gospels may be taken to indicate the existence of several independent records; and it is obvious that the handing down of various and

varying accounts of a particular occurrence, testifies to the fact of such an event having actually happened, and that it was matter of notoriety and general interest.

The coming of a stranger possessing such miraculous power to work good and evil was regarded with equal astonishment and dread. The demoniac was cured, but the swine were drowned. The loss of two thousand animals seemed a heavy price to pay for the recovery of a maniac. The inhabitants desired to be free from the risk of harbouring this mysterious visitor, and they agreed in requesting him to withdraw from their country. 'And when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their borders.' 'And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders.' Luke is more explicit as to the unanimity of the inhabitants. 'And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes round about asked him to depart from them; for they were holden with great fear.' Jesus did not hesitate to accede to the request of the people. 'And he entered into a boat, and returned.' The recovered maniac was loath to part from his benefactor, and craved permission to accompany him. 'And as he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with devils (Gr. demons) besought him that he might be with him.' Jesus would not allow this, but counselled the man to return to his home, and tell his friends what marvels God had done for him, and extol the divine mercy towards him. 'And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and *how* he had mercy on thee.' The fair inference from this is, that Jesus regarded himself merely as the instrument of God in working the cure. If he was able to cast out demons, it was by the power which God had given him. Here, again, Luke's narrative coincides very nearly with that of Mark. 'But the man from whom the devils (Gr. demons) were gone out prayed him that he might be with him: but he sent him away, saying, Return to thy house, and declare how great things God hath done for thee.' The advice of Jesus was followed: the man employed his recovered reason and power of action in relating publicly the astounding change which Jesus had wrought in him. 'And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him.' In Luke it stands thus: 'And he went his way, publishing throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done for him.' In the Introduction to 'The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels' it is assumed that an error has here occurred in copying: 'Now the word Decapolis means *ten city*, and just as *ten city* might be easily confused with *the city*, so might "Decapolis" be confused with "the city."' The way in which such an error might occur is then explained: '*Deca*—meaning *ten* might be mistaken by an unlearned copyist, for the numeral *ten*' &c., the Greek type making the explanation clear.

Mark closes his account with the words, 'And all men did marvel.' Every reader of this strange narrative must feel equal astonishment. There can be no question, however, that the three evangelists firmly believed the facts they recorded; and it is difficult to conceive how such an event should have obtained general and long-continued credence if it had not really happened. There could be no possible motive for inventing it, and the first promulgator of it, had it been a



fable, would have been laughed to scorn. The circumstances are graphically detailed, and the various points of the narrative arise very naturally. Accepting it as true, it leads to several important conclusions.

1. We must admit the existence of a race of spiritual, invisible Beings apart from man.
2. These spirits, or demons, were able to enter into the bodies of men, to control their actions, to degrade their mental faculties, to augment their physical strength, and even to speak through the vocal organs of the demoniac.
3. These demons possessed a knowledge superior, in some respects, to that of mankind. They knew of Jesus and his divine mission; they recognized him instantly; they were cognizant of his power, could attempt no resistance, and were compelled at his word to relinquish their hold upon the demoniac.
4. The mingling of the demon nature with the human nature was to the injury and degradation of the latter. The demoniac lost the power of controlling mind and body; he shunned society; he exhibited towards his fellow men the fierceness and hostility of a wild animal; and by cries and self-inflicted mutilations he bemoaned and emphasised the misery he suffered.
5. The effect of demonization upon inferior animals was to throw them into a state of frenzied terror; driven by some unseen power, they rushed down a precipice and into the sea.

Either the narrative is grossly untrue, or there existed in our world a race of spiritual Beings inimical and dangerous to mankind. The following remarks of Alford deserve careful consideration.

‘(1) The Gospel narratives are distinctly pledged to the historic truth of these occurrences. Either they are true, or the Gospels are false. For they do not stand in the same, or a similar position, with the discrepancies in detail so frequent between the Evangelists: but they form part of that general groundwork in which all agree. (2) Nor can it be said that they represent the opinion of the time, and use words in accordance with it. This might have been difficult to answer, but that they not only give such expressions as *possessed with devils*, *demonised* (Mark v. 16; Luke viii. 36), and other like ones, but relate to us words spoken by the Lord Jesus, in which the personality and presence of the demons is distinctly implied. See especially Luke xi. 17-26. Now either our Lord spoke these words, or He did not. If he did not, then we must at once set aside the concurrent testimony of the Evangelists to a plain matter of fact; in other words establish a principle which will overthrow equally every fact related in the Gospels. If He did, it is wholly at variance with any Christian idea of the perfection of truthfulness in Him who was truth itself, to suppose Him to have used such plain and solemn words repeatedly, before His disciples and the Jews, in encouragement of and connivance at, a lying superstition. . . . (6) We cannot tell in how many cases of insanity the malady may not even now be traced to direct demoniacal possession. And, finally, (7) the above view, which I am persuaded is the only one honestly consistent with any kind of belief in the truth of the Gospel narratives, will offend none, but those who deny the existence of the world of spirits altogether,



and who are continually striving to narrow the limits of our belief in that which is invisible; a view which at every step involves difficulties far more serious than those from which it attempts to escape.'

Matthew closes his account of the visit to the Gadarenes by saying, 'And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city.' That must mean Capernaum, the evangelist having previously stated, 'And leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea.' Mark tells us: 'And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him: and he was by the sea.' Luke adds that they welcomed his return, having waited for him in Capernaum. 'And as Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed him; for they were all waiting for him.' Among them, it would seem, were those disciples of John the Baptist who had put to him the question about fasting, and to whom he gave the reply which has been already considered, for Matthew tells us: 'While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a ruler (Gr. one ruler), and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.' Young renders: 'A ruler having come was bowing to him, saying, My daughter hath just now died.' Mark's account is as follows: 'And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jāirus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet, and beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: *I pray thee*, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole (or, saved), and live.' Young renders: 'My little daughter is at the last extremity.' Putting the two accounts together, they rather confirm than contradict each other. Jāirus knew that he had left his child at the turning-'point of death,' 'the last extremity,' and he feared that at the instant he spoke her spirit must have passed away, 'even now dead,' 'just now dead.' It was a plea of urgency, that Jesus might deign to interrupt his discourse and go to her who was left dying and was probably by that moment dead. Luke's account is as follows: 'And behold, there came a man named Jāirus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him to come into his house; for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.' Jesus at once desisted from his teaching, and, accompanied by his disciples, went with Jāirus. 'And Jesus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.' Mark states that there was a great crowd and pressure. 'And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.' Luke says: 'But as he went the multitudes thronged him.' Among the crowd was a woman who, for twelve years, had been in a deplorable state of ill-health. 'And behold, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him.' Mark describes the sufferings she had undergone in the hope of cure, her consequent impoverishment, and the inability of physicians to ameliorate her condition. 'And a woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind. . . .' Luke is to the same effect. 'And a woman having

9 Mat. 1

4 Mat. 13

5 Mark 21

8 Luke 40

9 Mat. 18

5 Mark 22, 23

8 Luke 41, 42

9 Mat. 19

5 Mark 24

8 Luke 42

9 Mat. 20

5 Mark 25-27

8 Luke 43

- an issue of blood twelve years, which (had spent all her living upon physicians, and) could not be healed of any, came behind him . . . The passage in brackets is omitted in the Vatican and other ancient MSS., but is retained by the Revisers and Tischendorf. The woman had a serious purpose in entering the crowd. Having heard about the wonderful cures wrought by the touch of Jesus, she supposed that the healing virtue streamed out even through his garment, so that if she could but touch any portion of it, she would be restored to health as others had been. In that hope she
- 5 Mark 27, 28 'came in the crowd behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole.' The
- 9 Mat. 21 belief was not openly expressed: Matthew explains that it was 'said within herself.' Matthew and Luke agree in stating that she touched
- 8 Luke 44 only 'the border of his garment.' The woman's idea would seem to some absurd, or at least superstitious; but it was right: virtue could and did issue from the body of Jesus, through his clothing, on the
- 5 Mark 29 contact with her hand. 'And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her plague (Gr. scourge).' At the same instant Jesus was conscious of the fact that healing power had emanated from him, although he
- „ 30 could not tell who had been its recipient. 'And straightway Jesus perceiving in himself that the power *proceeding* from him had gone forth, turned him about in the crowd, and said, Who touched my garments?' Tischendorf renders: 'And straightway Jesus knew fully in himself the power that went out of him.' The Greek verb is *epiginōscō*, 'to observe, recognise, find out, discover, become conscious of.' The Revisers also, by inserting the italicised word 'proceeding,' have indicated the inadequacy of the Authorised Version, which is indefinite: 'knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him.' There was no affirmative response to the question of Jesus, which
- „ 31 appeared, under the circumstances, so extraordinary as to excite on the part of the disciples enquiry, even expostulation. 'And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?' It was a strange scene: Jesus stopping, and not satisfied when those near him gave an absolute
- 8 Luke 45 denial. 'And when all denied, Peter said, and they that were with him, Master, the multitude press thee and crush *thee*.' No: it was no accidental pressure caused by the surging of the crowd, but a deliberate touch on the part of someone. 'But Jesus said, Some one
- „ 46 did touch me: for I perceived that power had gone forth from me.' Still there was no admission of the fact by any of the bystanders, and
- 5 Mark 32 Jesus looked round in all directions to find the person. 'And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.' The woman shrank from observation, but finding that Jesus insisted upon knowing who had made bold to touch him in that way, she cast aside her shamefaced reserve, approached him in fear and trembling, sank down at his feet, told him about her malady, and acknowledged the instantaneousness of the cure. 'But the woman fearing and trembling,
- „ 23 knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.' Forced against her will to speak, she was withheld by no false modesty, but in the hearing of all present declared everything to Jesus. 'And when the woman saw that she
- 8 Luke 47 was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared

in the presence of all the people for what cause she touched him, and how she was healed immediately.' Jesus answered her kindly and reassuringly. 'And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole (or, saved thee); go in peace, and be whole of thy plague (Gr. scourge).' Luke omits the last six words. Matthew's account differs somewhat. 'But Jesus turning and seeing her said, Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole (or, saved thee). And the woman was made whole (or, saved) from that hour.' Alford states that the words in the Authorised Version of Luke, 'be of good comfort,' are omitted in many ancient authorities, being probably inserted from Matthew. The Tauchnitz edition gives no indication of such omission in the three oldest MSS., yet Tischendorf and the Revisers omit the words.

The saying of Jesus to the woman, 'thy faith hath made thee whole,' must be understood in one of two ways: either, simply, that had not her faith led her to touch him, she would not have been cured; or, that the property of faith in her had made the touch of him effectual, and drawn out that healing virtue which mere physical contact without faith would not have done. That this last interpretation is the correct one, appears from other passages plainly indicating that, in many cases, without faith no cure could be effected. To two blind men, Jesus said: 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened.' When the father of the lunatic child said to Jesus, 'If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us,' Jesus gave the remarkable answer, 'If thou canst. All things are possible to him that believeth.' Was not that a plain intimation that the possibility of cure did not depend merely upon the ability of Jesus, but that it could certainly be drawn forth by those having faith in him. So the father understood, assured Jesus that he had faith, but begged that Jesus would help with his own faith to supply the deficiency of the father's faith: 'Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' This connection between faith and healing is indicated in the account of the restoration of the cripple by Paul. 'The same heard Paul speaking; who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole (or, saved), said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked.' The steady gaze of the apostle, and the answering faith of the cripple, were needed for the cure. In the same way we read of Peter 'fastening his eyes upon' the lame man, and that 'he took him by the right hand, and raised him up.' To effect such cures two things were necessary: a connection brought about, either by physical contact, or through the clothing, or by a steadfast gaze, between the healer and the healed, and faith on the part of the latter. Jesus was evidently desirous of impressing upon men this power of faith; he frequently dwelt on it, inculcating and enlogizing it in various ways, and in most emphatic terms. He is ever anxious to impress upon us the power of self-help residing in the exercise of faith, putting it foremost in the working of cures, and in the background the action of the healer. Where we might have expected him to say, 'God's power hath made thee whole,' or, 'my power hath made thee



whole,' he is careful to say only, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.'

- At the very moment he was saying it, there came up to the crowd messengers from the house of Jāirus with tidings of his daughter's death. They ventured to expostulate with him against giving any further trouble to Jesus. 'While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying, Thy daughter is dead : why troublest thou the Master (or, Teacher) any further?' Luke 5 Mark 35
- mentions only one messenger : 'While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying, Thy daughter is dead ; trouble not the Master (or, Teacher).'
- The accounts are not inconsistent : one person only would speak, though accompanied by others. Alford, however, sets that idea aside. He says : 'Little marks of accuracy come out in each of the two fuller accounts. Here we have "there cometh one," which was doubtless the *exact* fact : in Mark "there came certain," generally expressed. In Mark again we learn not only that Jesus heard, but that the message was not *reported* to him, but he *overheard it being said*, which is a minute detail not given here. Nothing could more satisfactorily mark the independent authority of the two narratives.' The Authorised Version of Mark continues : 'As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken . . '
- The Tauchnitz edition notes that the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read, 'But Jesus having casually heard the word . . '
- The Revised Version is as follows : 'But Jesus, not heeding (or, Jesus overhearing) the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe.' Tischendorf puts this more strongly : 'But Jesus refused to hear the word that was spoken : ' he made light of the message, would not allow the fact that the child was dead, and besought the father to have no fear that it was so, but to continue confident of her recovery. Luke states that he gave a positive assurance. 'But Jesus hearing it, answered him, Fear not ; only believe, and she shall be made whole (or, saved).'
- The happy result of faith in the case of the healed woman was an encouragement to its exercise on the part of the father, and doubtless served to strengthen his confidence in the word of Jesus. On approaching the house Jesus separated himself from those about him, and would only suffer three of his disciples to accompany him. 'And he suffered no man to follow with him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue.'
- There he found a noisy crowd of mourners : the hired musicians, 'flute-players,' had already come, and there was the usual ostentatious display of grief. 'And he beholdeth a tumult, and *many* weeping and wailing greatly.' Jesus startled them by saying that all this was out of place : death was not in the house, and the maiden simply slept. 'And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult, and weep ? the child is not dead, but sleepeth.' So astounding did the assertion appear, that they would not deign to treat it seriously, but went even to the length of ridiculing the speaker. 'And they laughed him to scorn.' Luke says they were far too sure of the fact to accept any assurance to the contrary. 'And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.' But Jesus insisted upon their departure, and the house being quiet, he proceeded to carry out the purpose which had brought him there. 'But he, having



put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him, and goeth in where the child was.' It was a solemn scene when that group of six stood in the hushed chamber of the dead. Jesus took the hand of the dead girl into his own, and uttered two simple words, 'Talitha cumi.' Alford notes : 'Talitha, in the ordinary dialect of the people, is a word of endearment addressed to a young maiden. So that the words are equivalent to, Rise, my child.' 'And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.' The addition, in the translation, of the words, 'I say unto thee,' brings out the fact that the call was a personal one on the part of Jesus, the word 'Talitha' denoting sympathy and affection. At the touch and voice of Jesus, the dead child revived. There was a sudden awakening and instantaneous movement : the quick uprising and walking natural to a child of twelve on being roused from sleep. 'And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked ; for she was twelve years old.' The swiftness of the recovery is noted by Luke : 'But he, taking her by the hand, called, saying, Maiden, arise. And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately.' Matthew also indicates this by using simply the word 'arose.' 'But when the crowd was put forth, he entered in, and took her by the hand ; and the damsel arose.' Jesus deemed it necessary to call attention to the fact that the exhausted condition of the child's system demanded immediate nourishment. 'And he commanded that *something* be given her to eat.' The inserted word 'something' is scarcely required. Tischendorf's and Young's renderings are simpler, and equally clear : 'And he commanded to give her to eat ;' 'And he directed that there be given her to eat.' The Authorised Version is objectionable : 'And he commanded to give her meat.' But for the considerateness of Jesus the child's pressing need of food might have been overlooked, owing to the state of wonder and excitement among those present, for we read : 'And they were amazed straightway with a great amazement.' Luke applies this specially to the parents ; the three apostles would show somewhat less astonishment, being accustomed to miracles wrought by Jesus. 'And her parents were amazed.' Jesus showed great anxiety to keep the matter secret. 'But he charged them to tell no man what had been done.' Mark is even more emphatic. 'And he charged them much that no man should know this.' He must have had some grave reason for concealing the fact. What was it ? Jesus had declared that the girl was not dead, but only asleep, and his assertion had been treated with ridicule, because those present 'knew' that she was dead. Jesus had taken the child by the hand, and as his statement that she was not dead was disbelieved, the act of touching the body would have been held as a defilement, according to the Mosaic law : 'He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days : the same shall purify himself therewith (the water of separation) on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean : but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord ; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel : because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean ; his unclean-

5 Mark 41

,, 42

8 Luke 54, 55

9 Mat. 25

8 Luke 55

5 Mark 42

8 Luke 56

,, 56

5 Mark 43

19 Num. 11-13

ness is yet upon him.' Assuming Jesus to have been ceremonially unclean, the Jews would not only have charged him with breaking the law if he failed to purify himself in the appointed way, but they might have urged that whoever touched him, or anything that he had touched, would thereby become unclean. 'Whosoever toucheth . . . a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath; the soul which toucheth any such shall be unclean until the even.' 'And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.' With eager crowds surrounding him, all anxious for his teaching, and many for his healing touch, how would such an idea have interfered with his beneficent labours, and spread anxiety, disappointment, inconvenience, among the multitudes he desired only to instruct and bless! And there was no middle course open: if the miracle was known at all, every detail of it would be insisted on by eager questioners, and there could be no suppression of the fact that Jesus had taken hold of the dead child's hand. Entire silence on the subject was the only possible mode of avoiding hostile and erroneous criticisms. No wonder Jesus felt the utmost anxiety, and laid upon those present the most binding obligation, to maintain entire silence. The injunction was only needed for the time being; when Jesus had quitted the neighbourhood, concealment would be no longer imperative. There is, therefore, no reason to marvel at the statement of Matthew: 'And the fame thereof (Gr. this fame) went forth into all that land.' The adoption of this view as to the motive of Jesus in enforcing silence, leads to the further inference, that he would not have touched the child had it not been necessary to do so. The touch, as well as the words, was essential for her restoration. The fact that a healing virtue resided in the person of Jesus, which could not in some cases be fully exercised without actual contact, and even then depended for its efficacy on the existence of faith in the mind of the person touched, is repeatedly brought to our notice in the gospel narratives. The case of the woman who touched his garment is, by itself, decisive on both points. We may be sure that when Jesus worked a miracle, he did it in the simplest way possible, and that no act or word of his was done or said for the mere sake of display. In the performance of his marvellous works, it is obvious that he made use of certain occult powers and laws of nature, known to him, but not to others, and which Science is still groping after, and may eventually discover. This is not inconsistent with the highest views conceivable of Jesus: the Supreme God himself may surely work his will by using the laws and powers of the material world which is constituted and ruled by him. Things which we term 'miraculous' and 'supernatural' are doubtless brought about by agencies, material or spiritual, to us unknown, by us unseen and incomprehensible, but which are as real and substantial as is the earth we tread and see, or the air we breathe and feel but cannot see.

On quitting the house of the parents of the restored child, Jesus was followed by two blind men. Their want of sight precluded them from approaching him, so they followed as best they could on the outskirts of the crowd, and to attract his notice they cried out his name, adding the title which they assumed he had the right to claim, and praying him to show his compassion towards them. Young

22 Lev. 5, 6

19 Num. 22

21 Mat. 26

renders: 'Deal kindly with us.' 'And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David.' Jesus did not stop at their crying, but passed on and entered into a house. The blind men managed to find their way thither, and obtained access to him. 'And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him.' Evidently they hoped for the restoration of their sight, and Jesus asked them whether they believed him able to accomplish that. 'And Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this?' They replied unhesitatingly in the affirmative. 'They say unto him, Yea, Lord.' The import of the word 'Lord' must not be exaggerated. Young renders it, 'Yes, Sir.' On receiving that assurance Jesus touched their eyes, but even then was careful to restrict their expectation and his declaration of the recovery of their sight to the possession by them of that faith which he deemed indispensable. 'Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you.' Here again our attention is called to the fact that healing virtue streamed forth from the person of Jesus only under certain conditions: (1) actual bodily contact, and (2) the existence of faith in the mind of the person brought into contact with Jesus. He seems to have deemed the latter more essential than the former, judging from his remark to the cured woman, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' In the case of the two blind men, their faith proved sufficient and effectual. 'And their eyes were opened.' With what wonder must they have looked round upon all things, and with what gratitude upon him who had so marvellously restored their sight! But on them also Jesus imposed secrecy with respect to the miracle. 'And Jesus strictly (or, sternly) charged them, saying, See that no man know it.' Doubtless he was actuated by the same motive as before. If any held that he had been lately ceremonially defiled by touching the dead child, then his touch would be deemed to have rendered the blind man 'unclean.' Jesus had asserted that the child was not dead, but only asleep, and his assertion had been laughed to scorn. It might well be contended also that the touch which brought back life and sight could neither produce nor contract defilement; but it was well to keep such discussions from arising, and the best way to ensure that was to say nothing whatever about either miracle. Obviously, the injunction to keep silence was only intended to be temporary: it would have been impossible to shut up the child from the knowledge of the world, or to expect the two men to counterfeited the blindness which had formerly been real. The command of Jesus would cease to be binding as soon as he had left the neighbourhood; and it was evidently so understood, for we are told: 'But they went forth, and spread abroad his fame in all that land.' It was enough that they had been discreetly silent for the moment; when the time for silence had gone by, they resolved to go from place to place proclaiming the beneficent power of Jesus. There is no ground for charging anyone with ingratitude, as though the expressed wish of Jesus with respect to these two miracles had been disobeyed. The following theories or guesses made by Alford may therefore be dismissed as erroneous. He says: 'The purpose of our Lord's earnestness appears to have been twofold: (1) that he might not be so occupied and overpressed with applications as to have neither time



nor strength for the preaching of the Gospel : (2) to prevent the already excited people from taking some public measure of recognition, and thus arousing the malice of the Pharisees before His hour was come. No doubt the two men were guilty of an act of disobedience in thus breaking the Lord's solemn injunction.'

Immediately upon the dismissal of these two men, another sufferer was brought to Jesus, a dumb man, a demoniac. 'And as they went forth (were coming out—Young), behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil (Gr. demon).' Simultaneously with the expulsion of the demon, the man's dumbness ceased. 'And when the devil (Gr. demon) was cast out, the dumb man spake.' In this case there was no command to keep the matter secret ; indeed, the cure would seem to have been performed before the multitude. This distinction between this and the two previous miracles may be explained by the fact that no personal contact with Jesus was required. We never read that he laid his hands upon any from whom he expelled demons. On the contrary, we are told : 'He cast out the spirits with a word ;' in some instances he 'rebuked' the demons ; and Luke indicates a difference between his mode of dealing with sick persons and possessed persons : 'All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him ; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out from many.' This miracle excited the amazement of the crowd which followed Jesus, and they declared that such an exhibition of power had never before been witnessed. 'And the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.' But the Pharisees were not content to be merely astonished, and to let the works of Jesus speak for themselves as being both unparalleled and beneficent. They formed a theory as to the source from which Jesus derived his strange power ; they asserted that his authority over demons was given him, not by God, but by the demon who was supreme over other demons. 'But the Pharisees said, By (or, in) the prince of the devils (Gr. demons) he casteth out devils (Gr. demons).' Being surrounded by critics so unscrupulous, who did not hesitate to malign his character and motives, and who persuaded themselves that this good work of his was a monstrous impiety, we can the better understand why Jesus was so careful to give no occasion of reproach, and to avoid the possibility of a question arising about ceremonial uncleanness on account of his having touched a dead body ; and especially when we remember that the Pharisees on former occasions had charged him with sabbath-breaking.

From that place Jesus returned, accompanied by his disciples, to 'his own country,' which probably means Nazareth. 'And he went out from thence ; and he cometh into his own country ; and his disciples follow him.' There he assumed the position of a religious teacher ; he delivered discourses in the synagogue, which were listened to by admiring crowds ; and he performed miracles, so that wonder was expressed as to the source from which he could have acquired such eloquence of speech and such powers of healing. 'And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue ; and many (or, the many) hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things ? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and *what mean* such mighty works (Gr.



powers) wrought by his hands?' The translation has caused it to be inferred that the astonishment was based upon the performance of miracles there, whereas we read (verse 5) that 'he could there do no mighty work.' Tischendorf renders the passage: 'Whence hath this man these things? and what is the wisdom which is given unto this man? and are such mighty works wrought by his hands?' They criticised, questioned, doubted everything: to what agency was his ability due? on what recognised teaching did his wisdom rest? was the report of his miracles true and unexaggerated? Probably the greatest stress was laid upon the question as to the origin of his power, which we know was attributed to demoniacal agency, for Matthew's account is restricted to that point. 'And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works (Gr. powers)?' Either he did not possess the marvellous sagacity and powers reported of him, or he must have attained them in some unnatural, unauthorised way. For his origin was known: his reputed father had been a carpenter, his mother was a woman named Mary, he was one of a family of five boys and of several girls, all of the latter still living in the neighbourhood. 'Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?' Mark is to the same effect, except that he puts the question, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?' This seems to indicate that Jesus had learnt, and at one time followed, his reputed father's trade. These homely details may be pondered under various aspects.

13 Mat. 54

,, 55, 56

6 Mark 3

(1) It is obvious that Jesus was generally regarded as an ordinary man; nothing was known about the supernatural circumstances attending his birth. Probably his mother and her husband preserved entire silence with respect to the history of their earlier years. Such mysterious events would never cease to be pondered by them, and the gradual unfolding of the life and work of Jesus must have been watched by them with keenest interest; but it was most natural that they should shrink from making these solemn subjects matters of common talk. Mary's other children knew no more about them than did the world generally. What changes, by death and otherwise, must have occurred during the thirty years since Jesus was born! The new generation had no opportunity of consulting those records from which the earlier portion of Luke's narrative must have been compiled. A few old men and women, in Jerusalem and the neighbourhood, may have remembered—some one thing, some another, of tales which were afloat a quarter of a century ago, and which probably never got so far abroad as Nazareth in Galilee; but now even the early promise of intellectual superiority which Jesus had given when, being but twelve years old, he astounded the doctors of the law in the temple by his understanding and his answers, even this had faded from the minds of men, and evidently had never reached the ears of those who now raised the question, 'Whence hath this man all these things?'

13 Mat. 56

(2) We can gather from this some idea of the difficulties and trials which beset the career of Jesus. He was bound to emerge from the narrowness of his surroundings, but how slow, and tentative, and

disheartening may have been his first steps in the path of duty and of free action ! How must he have watched for the earliest opportunity of expanding his youthful mind by discoursing with the Jewish doctors ! Even at that early age he felt straitened, shackled, with respect to his intellectual and spiritual development. If he went alone to the temple for instruction, it must have been because otherwise no opportunity was afforded him. His mother's solicitude was to keep him by her side, away from harm and evil. Let us try to realise the position. We can scarcely venture to suppose that, up to the early age of twelve, there can have been any exchange of confidence between the mother and her son, with respect either to his supernatural birth or the grand destiny awaiting him. It would have been a moral impossibility for her to have explained to her little boy the marvel and the mystery of his coming into the world. Wisdom would dictate also that she should not attempt to inflame his growing mind with visions of future greatness. On all points she must have decided, for many reasons, to maintain a discreet silence. She had much to ponder in her heart, and her natural and proper attitude towards her first-born son was that of quiet, trustful, reverential expectation. To care for him, to watch over him, to guard him : that must have seemed the sum total of her duty. She knew that for him there were—unseen—other Watchers, other Guides, other Instructors. The present obscurity of his lot, and all the circumstances of his home life, must have been foreseen and prearranged by the highest Wisdom ; it was for her to be simply hopeful and quiescent. Her husband also was a conscientious, reserved, thoughtful man, as may be inferred from Matthew's description of him : 'Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on those things . . .' The notoriety attending the infant Jesus, owing to the visits of the shepherds and the Magi and the pious outbursts of Simeon and Anna, was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the flight into Egypt. In a foreign country, surrounded by strangers, there was no opportunity, even had there been a desire, for talking of the marvels connected with the child's birth and prospects : and when they returned from Egypt it was not to the same neighbourhood as before, but to Galilee. Everything, therefore, favoured a policy of reserved, discreet silence, which could not fail to become habitual to Mary and Joseph. He would naturally avoid anything likely to make his wife the object of public wonder and discourse. How easily might her fair fame be tarnished by the breath of unjust suspicion, and how incredible would the account have seemed whereby alone she could be justified ! With a family growing up about them, they could make no distinction between one child and another. No moment would ever seem the right one for breaking the silence which had been maintained for years, nor could there be any necessity or justification for telling Jesus all that Luke has told us about him. It seems most probable that these things never came to the ears of Jesus. Indeed, the expression used by the evangelist may be taken to signify that everything connected with the mystery of her son's birth remained a secret locked up in Mary's own bosom. He says : 'But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.' Pro-

1 Mat. 19, 20

2 Luke 19

bably one of her subjects of meditation was as to the time, manner and extent of the revelation which would be made to Jesus of his supernatural origin and destiny. She would neither presume to teach him herself, nor deem the recognised expounders of the Law, with their prescribed course of study, either essential or desirable for the divinely-created Messiah of Israel. This absence of human instruction was in after years remembered, and commented upon in somewhat disdainful terms : ‘The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?’ With what interest and solemn gladness must Mary and her husband have heard the child’s observation when they found him in the temple : ‘How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?’ They understood not the saying : how could they possibly anticipate what would be the proper course of action for him of whom the angel had foretold, ‘He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High : and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David?’ Untaught of man, unaided by human counsel, Jesus was left alone to work out the problem of his glorious destiny. Wisdom was given him in abundance, and supernatural powers of healing, but no recognition, no favour, no countenance from those to whom the nation looked for guidance. He had to choose his disciples and apostles from those in a lower class of life, and to bear the contemptuous obloquy of those who assumed that there could be no wisdom based upon anything else than their own teachings, and that any spiritual influence which did not come through their channel, must have been owing to a compact with ‘the prince of the demons.’ The lowness of the origin of Jesus, the meanness of his surroundings and the lack of any recognised educational status were, in their eyes, fatal to any claims on his part of authority as a teacher, or of superiority in intellect or action. ‘And they were offended (Gr. caused to stumble) in him.’ Jesus reminded them that he had elsewhere met with a far different reception, and instead of being treated with scorn, had been held in honour, therein resembling teachers in general, whose experience justified the proverb that the only places where a prophet fails to receive honour are—in his own country, among his relatives, and in his own house. ‘And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.’ The want of faith in Jesus restricted on this occasion his work of healing : ‘And he did not many mighty works (Gr. powers) there because of their unbelief.’ Mark intimates that this was not for want of will but of power, which Jesus could only exercise in a few cases. ‘And he could there do no mighty work (Gr. power), save that he laid his hand upon a few sick folk, and healed them.’ The want of faith may have kept many from applying to Jesus for healing ; or there may have been applicants whom he would not attempt to cure, owing to the absence in them of that faith which he so constantly declared to be essential to recovery. We never read that he attempted, and failed to effect, a cure, as his disciples did on one occasion. In that instance, before effecting the cure himself, Jesus dwelt on the necessity of faith. We have seen also that in the case of the two blind men Jesus, as though unable to satisfy himself that they had faith enough to make his touch effectual, was careful

7 John 15

2 Luke 49

1 Luke 32

6 Mark 3

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13 Mat. 58

6 Mark 5

9 Mark 18



9 Mat. 29

to limit its operation accordingly, saying, 'According to your faith be it done unto you.' Mark adds that the want of faith now so generally evinced, was a matter of astonishment to Jesus. It was a striking instance of the influence of prejudice and intolerance, leading to the rejection of the clearest evidence and the thwarting of the most beneficent purposes. 'And he marvelled because of their unbelief.'

6 Mark 6

In other places his experience was very different. There was not a city or a village which he did not visit; he taught in their synagogues, proclaiming a message of gladness concerning the new condition of life, duty and privilege comprised in the term 'kingdom,' and healing every variety of disease. 'And Jesus went about (was going up and down—Young) all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom (the good news of the reign—Young), and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.' In the course of this journey the mind of

9 Mat. 35

Jesus was painfully impressed with a sense of the distressed and helpless condition of the poor, who then, as now, constituted the 'multitudes.' He gave utterance to his compassion, comparing them to a flock of wandering sheep, uncared for, pastureless and shepherdless. 'But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered (faint and cast-down—Young), as sheep not having a shepherd.' Their depressed state seemed to him, however, precisely suited to the reception of those glad tidings which it was the business of his life to communicate. The prominent feature of his mission, apart from his miracles

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11 Mat. 5

of healing, was described by him in the words, 'The poor have good tidings preached to them.' He could discern in that field of labour a rich harvest for earnest workers, who, alas! were out of all proportion to the wants of the masses. He sought to impress this fact on the minds of his disciples. 'Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.' He would have

9 Mat. 37

them regard that as the great want of the age; and he added: 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest.'

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How is this to be understood? By putting a capital letter to the word 'Lord,' the translators have endorsed and strengthened the idea that Jesus intended prayer to God: that he urged united supplication as the means of moving the Divine Will to influence the minds of various persons, that they might undertake the work of labouring among the masses; that God was anxious this should be done, but waited for an appeal to be made to him, as though he required to be reminded and entreated with respect to the ingathering of his spiritual harvest. That, more or less, is the modern idea of prayer on behalf of missionary work; but such an interpretation of these words of Jesus is neither necessary nor natural. The word 'harvest' is figurative; the 'lord of the harvest' signifies the overseer, the 'ruler of the harvest,' to whom reapers would, as a matter of course, apply for work when they saw the crop ripened and a deficient supply of labourers. Jesus impressed two facts on his disciples: that there was much work on hand, and not enough engaged in it; and he urged them to offer themselves as labourers, to put themselves under the direction of the harvest-superintendent, and so meet the necessity of the time by at once engaging in their



proper sphere of labour. It was a call, not to mere prayer, but to action, and accordingly Jesus proceeded to summon the twelve whom he had specially chosen, that under his auspices they might enter upon this work. 'And he called unto him his twelve disciples.' To 10 Mat. 1  
 them he imparted the powers he himself possessed of exorcism and of healing: 'and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast 1  
 them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.' Mark mentions the former power only: 'And he gave them 6 Mark 7  
 authority over the unclean spirits;' but Luke agrees with Matthew: 'And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and 9 Luke 1  
 authority over all devils (Gr. demons), and to cure diseases.' The statement is as startling as it is positive. Such powers lie altogether outside the recognised limits of human action. That Jesus should have possessed them, excites our admiration; that he should have been able to impart them to whom he chose, adds to the marvel, while at the same time the fact indicates that there are subtle sources and modes of influence within all of us, which, under proper guidance and cultivation, may become the common heritage of humanity. Although Jesus never failed in any work he attempted, and could even raise the dead, we are bound to believe, from his own words, that there were limitations to the exercise of his power, the efficacy of which depended often upon the existence of faith in those applying for his help. Probably the conditions under which his gifts could be imparted to others were limited in the same way; his apostles must acquire somewhat of their Master's faith, before they could attempt to perform his works. We are not told, and are at a loss to imagine, the nature of the instructions now given by Jesus to his disciples in order to convey to them the ability of working miracles. We are simply informed that he gave them 'power and authority;' he delegated to them the right of imitating his own method, and impressed their minds with the assurance of success. The absence of any explanation may be taken to indicate that there was nothing beyond that to explain.

Matthew gives the names of the twelve apostles, placing them in pairs, and adding: 'These twelve Jesus sent forth.' Mark explains 10 Mat. 5  
 this by saying, 'And he called unto him the twelve, and began to 6 Mark 7  
 send them forth by two and two.' This first missionary enterprise must have been carefully pondered and arranged in the mind of Jesus. He had decided that it was best to let two go together; and before dismissing them he gave them a parting address and precise instructions with respect to their course of action. He began by defining and restricting their sphere of labour: they were not to go into any part chiefly frequented by foreigners, nor to offend the prejudices of Samaritans and Jews alike by entering any city inhabited by the former. 'These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, 10 Mat. 5  
 Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans.' They were not sent to convert men from one form of religion to another, but rather to teach and succour the multitudinous poor among those of their own creed, those 'lost sheep' whose pitiful condition had moved so deeply the compassion of Jesus. 'But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' And 11  
 throughout their journey they were to preach, their one subject of discourse being, the nearness of the heavenly kingdom. 'And as ye 7

go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Let them also imitate their Master by exercising similar miraculous powers. 10 Mat. 8 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils (Gr. demons).' Their ability to perform such works was not restricted, and it behoved them therefore to exercise their marvellous gifts without stint. 'Freely ye received, freely give.' There is no resisting this plain statement; and they who have been in the habit of assuming that the miracles wrought by Jesus were evidences of his 'divinity,' will do well to ponder it. It is stated that Jesus communicated to twelve men miraculous powers, and Matthew records his command to them, 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.' We are astounded to hear Jesus speak in this tone of calm assurance about mysteries of healing and of influence which lie far outside the range of ordinary experience, which to this day remain inexplicable, and by some are regarded as incredible. But who can analyse the subtle connection existing between mind and matter, or define the limits of the strange phenomena attaching to spiritual influence? Science has yet to study and unravel such mysteries, and when her task is accomplished, these things which some reject as impossible, and others regard as supernatural, will be traced to the working of natural laws, and become, under fixed conditions and limitations, the common heritage of humanity. The deepest faith will prove the highest science: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do.'

The instructions given by Jesus to his disciples were peculiar and very stringent. He forbade their making any preparations whatever for their journey. They were to go forth in an unselfish, trustful spirit; they must not think about replenishing their purses before starting, even down to the smallest coin; they must not trouble to take a supply of food, not even a wallet wherein to carry it; they must not encumber themselves with an extra coat, or a change of shoes, or even a walking stick. 10 Mat. 10 'Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses (Gr. girdles); no wallet for *your* journey, neither two coats, nor shoes (sandals—Young), nor staff.' Luke is to the same effect: 9 Luke 3 'And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats.' Mark's account differs somewhat. 6 Mark 8, 9 'And he charged them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money (Gr. brass) in their purse (Gr. girdle); but *to go* shod with sandals: and, *said he*, put not on two coats.' Here they are bidden to take a staff, and to be shod with sandals, whereas Matthew's words are 'nor sandals, nor staff.' There is no actual contradiction; Alford points out that all depends on the word 'provide' (rendered by the Revisers 'get'): a staff would be a good thing for them to take on their walking tour, but only if they happened to have one: and they must see that the feet were properly protected by sandals, although they might not carry a second pair. In charging his messengers to go thus unprovided, Jesus relied, and would have them rely, upon the sense of fair dealing and justice which would induce those who received benefits through them to provide what might be necessary for the benefactors. 'For the labourer is worthy of his food.' Jesus advised them to be specially careful as to the character

of those with whom they would come into closest intercourse during their pilgrimage. They must not take up the first lodging which offered itself, as though their surroundings were a matter of indifference, but at every stopping-place on their route they must ascertain by careful enquiry who, among those willing to receive such travellers, was held in good repute. 'And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy.' And having once made choice of a lodging, they were forbidden to change it: 'and there abide till ye go forth.' Great stress was laid on that, Mark and Luke confining their accounts to that point. 'And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence.' 'And into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart.' Doubtless these precautions were wise and necessary. There may have been much in the social habits and intercourse of the time to call for circumspection. Any discredit brought upon the disciples would be reflected upon their Master, and their work and his marred thereby. It was desirable the apostles should be brought into contact with those most disposed to receive their religious teaching; and this object would be best attained through the means of persons who were known to interest themselves in such matters. For the purpose both of teaching and of healing it was desirable the apostles should retain a fixed abode, that their help might be sought at all times by those requiring it, and needless trouble and inconvenience spared to invalids and their friends. Moreover, influence of any kind is most effective when it radiates continuously from a fixed, central point. Jesus further enjoined his disciples to observe the customary forms of courteous greeting. Their first duty on entering a house would be to show proper marks of respect to the family. 'And as ye enter into the house, salute it.' If the members of the household were sufficiently well-disposed and open-minded to appreciate the message brought by the apostles, their coming would form an epoch in the family history, and the consciousness of rectitude and blessedness which filled the hearts of the disciples would impart itself to those with whom they dwelt. 'And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it.' But if, as might well happen, they encountered minds too narrow and warped by prejudice to admit of the reception of the new teaching, there need be no unseemly disputation, no sense of injury arising out of the rejection of their message; the apostles could simply fall back upon their own convictions, and maintain that mental calmness which had come to them through their intercourse with Jesus. 'But if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.' But they must be prepared to meet, not merely indifference and incredulity, but absolute, uncompromising hostility. In some places they would be refused a hearing, and forbidden to preach. When thus expelled from a house or a town, Jesus would have them intimate, by a well-known, significant action, their sense of the degradation and peril attaching to the inhabitants. 'And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet.' 'And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them.' 'And as many as receive you not, when ye depart from that city, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them.'

10 Mat. 11

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6 Mark 10

9 Luke 4

10 Mat. 12

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6 Mark 11

9 Luke 5



10 Mat. 15

Alford explains : ' It was a custom of the Pharisees, when they entered Judæa from a Gentile land, to do this act, as renouncing all communion with Gentiles.' Jesus declared that the rejection of his messengers would be followed by a very stern retribution. The proffered salvation which would have modified and stemmed the course of social evil, being deliberately repudiated, there would remain no escape from impending judgment. ' Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement, than for that city.' How are we to understand these solemn words ? That a heavier doom of punishment impended, than that which once fell on the cities of the plain ? That was a strange, exceptional visitation of divine vengeance, involving utter destruction, to which, in no sense, can the word ' tolerable ' apply. The expression ' tolerable ' refers, not to the extent and nature of the punishment, but to the ' judgement ' which decreed it. Abraham was assured that the existence of Sodom would be borne with, tolerated, if only ten righteous men could be found therein. In the case assumed by Jesus, the whole city would have rejected the apostles, not one house opening its door to receive them. Such an exhibition of intolerance on the part of the inhabitants, would be regarded with equal intolerance whenever their conduct came up for judgment.

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Jesus did not conceal from his disciples the trying and perilous nature of their mission. He told them, ' Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' That might seem a dangerous and desperate policy ; but it was necessary, and Jesus would have them realise their position, and act accordingly. Let them exercise circumspection to the utmost, imitate the proverbial wisdom of the serpent, but consider themselves as entirely without powers of offence or self-defence, dovelike in harmlessness and simplicity. ' Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless (or, simple) as doves.' On the expression ' I send you forth ' Alford inserts the note : ' Send forth, (Gr. *apostello*), is in direct connexion with their name *Apostles*.'

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In the prosecution of their work the apostles were to be on their guard against opposition, which might rise up at any moment from any quarter. ' But beware of men.' Instead of sympathy, there would be persecution. The preachers of the new doctrine would be deemed heretics, councils would be called to try them, and they would be subjected to the indignity of bodily chastisement in places set apart for religious worship : ' for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you.' In addition to such ecclesiastical censure and punishment, they would be arraigned before tribunals on account of their loyalty to Jesus, so that rulers and heathens might become acquainted with the teaching of him and his apostles. ' Yea, and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.' Under such circumstances Jesus would have them indifferent as to the form and matter of their defence before the tribunal of justice, and he bids them rely upon the inspiration of the moment.

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' But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak : for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak.'

This advice Jesus bases upon the further assurance : ' for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.'



These words require consideration. They may be understood as conveying a promise of supernatural inspiration restricted to the twelve apostles, and—it can scarcely be denied—further restricted to the special and exceptional occasions when they would stand before magistrates and rulers. One of Alford's comments here is as follows : 'It is also to be observed that in the great work of God in the world, human individuality sinks down and vanishes, and God alone, His Christ, His Spirit, is the worker.' This view is certainly strengthened by Young's rendering : 'It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak ; for ye are not the speakers, but the Spirit of your Father who is speaking in you.' On the other hand, we must not leave out of consideration the meaning which Jesus himself attached to the word 'father.' 'I speak the things which I have seen with *my* (or, 8 John 38 the) Father : and ye also do the things which ye heard from *your* (or, the) father . . . If God were your Father ye would love me . . . ,, 41, 42 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do.' The distinction is here sharply drawn between the father-God and the father-devil. The works of those to whom Jesus then spoke were devil works, and in that sense not their own. Every act and every speech has its spiritual fatherhood stamped upon it. Yielding to the devil's will, his children do his works and speak his words. Yielding to God's will, his children, having followed his leading, will be sure, when the crisis of their course of action comes, to speak under the same spiritual influence. No counsels of worldly or personal advantage sent forth the apostles upon their mission : no careful preparation would be required to frame their defence and justify them in the eyes of their opponents. That attempt were best left alone : as they had been enabled to do their Father's work in the world, they might rely upon being able to speak his words before the world. This was more than a special promise to the twelve, it being based upon the general principle : 'for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.'

Another comment of Dean Alford on this passage is as follows : 'It is to be observed that our Lord never in speaking to His disciples says *our* Father, but either *my* Father (ch. xviii. 10) or *your* Father (as here), or both conjoined (John xx. 17) : never leaving it to be inferred that God is in the same sense His Father and our Father.' Only into the realms of dogmatic theology could an argument so far-fetched and illogical find entrance. It amounts to this : Jesus spoke of God as *my* Father, as *your* Father, and, in one sentence, as *my* Father and *your* Father : which statements forbid the inference that God can be the Father of Jesus and the Father of the disciples in the same sense ! If, in amazement, we ask, Why ? the answer is, because the word *our* is not used, either instead of *my* and *your*, or in addition to *my* and *your*. If a person be alluded to as *my* brother and *your* brother, would it not be monstrous to assert that he could not be brother to both 'in the same sense ?' and to base that assertion on the absence of the word *our* ? To an unprejudiced mind, the words *my* and *your* would be equivalent to *our*, if they be not understood to mark even more emphatically the absolute identity of the relationship between the parties.

Jesus was far from expecting that either his doctrine or his messengers would be generally well received. He foresaw and fore-

told a terrible amount of opposition, persecution and suffering. Adherence to his faith and cause would involve the rupture of the closest family ties, and lead even to blood-shedding. 'And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death (or, put them to death).' This outburst of religious bigotry would be attributed to the apostles, and cause them to be held in universal execration. 'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.' But at the end of all this trial and danger lay safety. 'But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.' Young renders: 'But who hath endured to the end—he shall be saved:' the long vista of gloom and suffering, however fatal even its termination, would close in brightness. Yet they must not court death, nor fail to avail themselves of any lawful opportunity of escape. When persecuted in one place, they could take refuge in another, not the most remote, as shrinking from their sphere of work, but the next city in their course. 'But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next.' The reading 'next' has been adopted by the Revisers, and by others instead of 'another,' which stands in the Authorised Version, and which agrees with the three oldest MSS. According to Tischendorf and Young, the proper rendering is 'the other,' which, coming after 'this,' equally indicates contiguity. The sphere of labour assigned to the apostles was so wide, that however frequent their removal from place to place, it would be impossible to cover the ground within the time at their disposal. That, in part, seems to be the meaning of the emphatic statement of Jesus: 'For verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come': which Young renders: 'For verily I say to you, ye may not have completed the cities of Israel till the Son of man may come.' Why Jesus should here use the title 'Son of man' is not apparent from the context. We find it used in close connection with the word 'Christ.' 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' or, according to some authorities, 'that I the Son of man am?' Then Peter acknowledged him to be, 'the Christ of God'; whereupon Jesus commanded them to tell no man that he was the Christ, and immediately added, 'The Son of man must suffer many things, . . . and the third day be raised up.' This indicates that the titles 'Son of man' and 'Christ' might be used synonymously; and accordingly what Jesus here attributes to the Son of man, he subsequently attributed to 'Christ.' 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day.' The 'Christ' was the 'anointed one,' the highest representative of humanity, and to impress this truth Jesus was accustomed to designate him 'the Son of man.' Therefore we may understand the passage in question to mean: 'Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Christ be come.' In the minds of the apostles the 'Christ,' the 'Son of man,' and Jesus were one and the same. But the precise sense in which he here speaks of his coming, is not evident, either from the words or their context.

The apostles were reminded that they could not hope to escape the persecution which had arisen against Jesus himself. 'A disciple is not above his master (or, teacher), nor a servant (Gr. bond-servant) above his lord.' The utmost they could hope, as representing him,

was to stand upon the same level in popular estimation. Had he not been accused of sabbath-breaking, laughed to scorn, criticised and rejected by his countrymen? What obloquy might they not expect, knowing that their Master had been denounced as in league with the prince of the devils? 'It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master (or, teacher), and the servant (Gr. bond-servant) as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub (Gr. Beelzebul) how much more *shall they call* them of his household!' Let them meet such attacks with an unfaltering courage, relying upon the purity of their motives, and their ultimate justification in the sight of all men. 'Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.' Between Jesus and his disciples there were no esoteric, secret doctrines: every thought he had communicated in private would bear the light of public notoriety, and every whispered word might be borne upon the four winds. 'What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.' And in the prosecution of their work, all dread of death must be cast aside. Beyond the infliction of capital punishment the malice and power of their adversaries could not go: the body which holds the life may be destroyed, but no human agency can quench the spiritual life which tabernacles in the flesh. 'And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.' But what man cannot do, God can do: destroy a human being utterly, irrecoverably, as easily and as surely as the refuse and abominations of the city were consumed in the fire kept burning for the purpose in the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem. 'But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gr. Gehenna).' Yet the word rendered 'destroy,' *apollumi*, must not be pressed as signifying absolute annihilation. It carried also a much milder meaning, being sometimes rendered 'lose,' as in the passages: 'go after that which is *lost*, until he find it'; 'I have found the piece which I had *lost*'; 'he was *lost*, and is found.' 'Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing *be lost*.' 'Work not for the meat *which perisheth*.' The verb also signified 'simply to fall into ruin, to be undone; to fall away, fail; to be wretched or miserable.'

A portion of this discourse is given by Luke, but not as spoken on the occasion of sending forth the apostles. It would seem that he had nothing to guide him as to when it was delivered, and therefore inserted it in the most fitting and likely part of his narrative. He places it immediately after a warning uttered by Jesus against hypocrisy, with which the opening words might well be taken to have some connection. 'But there is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed: and hid, that shall not be known. Wherefore whatsoever ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.' What follows, however, has no bearing upon hypocrisy. 'And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power (or, authority) to cast into hell (Gr. Gehenna); yea, I say unto you, Fear him.' According to Matthew, the destruction of body and soul in Gehenna is simul-

10 Mat. 25

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15 Luke 4

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6 John 12

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12 Luke 2, 3

" 4, 5



taneous ; according to Luke, there is first bodily destruction, followed by a consignment to Gehenna. The memory of one recorder of the words of Jesus may have failed to reproduce his exact form of expression, but amidst the discrepancy between the two accounts there is traceable the same idea, that of a Judge who alone has authority to declare who are malefactors in his sight, and to pronounce and enforce the doom of punishment to malefactors. 'The word Gehenna is composed of two other (Hebrew) words, *a valley* and Hinnom, literally, the valley of Hinnom . . . This word Gehenna is used Jos. xv. 8, and is translated *the valley of Hinnom*. And 2 Kings xxiii. 10 and Jos. vii. 32, *the valley of the son of Hinnom* . . . There was at the time when our Saviour spake a valley or place near Jerusalem, called, Gehenna—a place well known to his auditors . . . A fire was kept continually burning in the valley of Hinnom, to consume the dead carcases, garbage, and filth of Jerusalem.'

Jesus bade his disciples take comfort in the thought of God's care for the least and least-esteemed of his creatures. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?' Alford explains that the word 'sparrows' denotes any small birds, and that 'farthing' is the Greek word 'assarion,' derived from 'as,' and 'was used in Greek and Hebrew to signify the meanest, most insignificant amount.' Luke puts the question thus: 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?' Probably Jesus quoted both prices: the birds had so little value that an additional one was willingly thrown in whenever the purchase money exceeded the smallest coin. Yet God's wisdom, care and providence were as conspicuous in the sparrow as in any other of his creatures; the tiny wings were exquisitely feathered; there was no oversight to be dreaded on the Maker's part, involving failure of flight or danger of falling. 'And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father.' All that was needful for the sparrow had been provided for by his omniscience: 'And not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God.' Each hair of a man's head, equally with each feather in a bird's wing, is a matter of concern to God. 'But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' Therefore let them not distrust the protection and oversight of God, but remember that as doers of his work in the world they were in his sight of more value than that multitude of feathered songsters who had only his providence to rest on, and were safe in doing so. 'Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.'

Devotion to the name and cause of Jesus on the part of his disciples would be reciprocated by him; they being faithful to him before men, he would be faithful to them before God. 'Every one therefore who shall confess me (Gr. in me) before men, him (Gr. in him) will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven.' The whole teaching of Jesus is of one piece, every part harmonising from first to last. In the sermon on the mount he impressed his disciples with the anticipation of a future life in the heavenly world, and he has still no other, no nearer, no surer recompense for his followers: a sphere of labour upon earth among men, and its attendant reward in the heavens with Jesus before God. And how closely does Jesus draw the bond of union between himself and his disciples! He stands forth, alike in earth and heaven, a man among men: he will do for them what they have done for him; he will distinguish



between friends and foes, will acknowledge the former and repudiate the latter. 'But whosoever shall deny me before men him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' This confession and denial must be understood as being continuous, habitual, persistent, denoting a tone of mind and a course of action. To 'confess in' Jesus 'before men' obviously means much more than any mere subscription to a dogma or repetition of a creed. No such narrow conception as that was in the minds of the apostles when, taking their Teacher's name upon their lips and their lives in their hands, or rather, placing their lives in other hands than their own, they went forth to preach his doctrines to the world. 'Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.' What a strange mockery would it have seemed to the apostles, had they been told the acceptance and expression of such an idea was equivalent to a confession of him before men! Neither is it to be supposed that the confession or denial on the part of Jesus refers to one special act on one particular day of judgment: confession of Jesus by us includes acceptance of his teaching and devotion to his cause, the denial of him involving rejection and disesteem, with tacit or expressed opposition; confession of us by Jesus must include appreciation of our motives and characters, and the promotion of our best interests; and his denial of us must be the expression of his want of sympathy, his averseness from our aims and ambitions, his repulsion of us from the circle of his friendship. In Luke's narrative this saying of Jesus is somewhat differently worded, which may be either owing to imperfect reporting or to its having been spoken on more than one occasion. In both passages the sense is the same. 'And I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me (Gr. in me) before men, him (Gr. in him) shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God.' Here the title 'Son of man' is introduced, and instead of 'before my Father which is in heaven,' we have 'before the angels (messengers—Young) of God.' We have seen that the title 'Son of man' was adopted by Jesus, and also applied by him to the 'Christ.' Therefore the confession or denial would be exercised by Jesus in his character of the Messiah, the crowned representative of mankind. In his highest aspect and office he shows himself intensely human, the loving brother of his chosen ones, in presence of the common Father and of angelic beings.

Jesus was anxious that his apostles should realise the fact, that the result of his coming would not be harmony among men, but the very reverse. 'Think not that I came to send (Gr. cast) peace on the earth: I came not to send (Gr. cast) peace, but a sword.' Young renders: 'Ye may not suppose that I came to put peace on the earth; I came not to put peace, but a sword.' In Luke's narrative this strong figure of speech is prefaced by another: 'I came to cast fire upon the earth.' He had not shrunk from the task, and he must be prepared to accept and face the consequences: 'And what will I, if it is already kindled?' He himself must pass through the fire, be baptized in the flame; and until he had undergone the ordeal he was conscious of a feeling of oppression, restraint, hindrance: 'But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened

10 Mat. 23

12 Luke 8, 9

10 Mat. 34

12 Luke 49

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till it be accomplished !' Young renders : ' how am I pressed till it be ended ! ' Then Jesus added : ' Think ye that I have come to give peace in the earth ? I tell you, Nay ; but rather division.' The sword of dissension would sever the closest family ties. ' For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law : and a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.' In Luke the idea is amplified : a whole family is represented as at strife, the number on one side being as nearly as possible that on the other. ' For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father ; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother ; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' The intensity of the strife could not exceed the importance of the subject. Like all great reforms, this also must be tested and shaped in the hot furnace of controversy, and no private friendships could be allowed to interfere with fidelity to the cause and its Founder. ' He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.' At all hazards, and at any cost, the disciples of Jesus must bear his burden and follow his steps. ' And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me.' It would be but reasonable to suppose that the taking of a cross was some proverbial expression, like the taking of a yoke, which would be sufficiently significant to all who heard the saying ; but Alford argues to the contrary : ' How strange must this prophetic announcement have seemed to the Apostles ! It was no Jewish proverb (for crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment), no common saying, which our Lord here and so often utters. . . He does not here plainly mention *His Cross*, but leaves it to be understood, see ver. 25. This is one of those sayings of which John xii. 16 was eminently true.' In immediate connection with the mention of a cross Jesus certainly alludes to the loss of life. ' He that findeth (or, found) his life (or, soul) shall lose it ; and he that loseth (or, lost) his life (or soul) for my sake shall find it.' Young renders : ' He who hath found his life shall lose it, and he who hath lost his life for my sake shall find it.' Alford adopts this rendering, and Tischendorf also uses the past tense, ' found, lost.' This saying of Jesus has obviously a very deep meaning ; but it is easier to admire its depth, than to divine its import. Whether it be taken literally or figuratively, the ' life ' lost must be identical with the ' life ' found : we must not, for instance, interpret the one of natural and the other of spiritual life. Alford insists upon this, saying, ' his life . . . it, refer to the *same thing*,' but he immediately explains that away by adding, ' but in somewhat different senses. The first life is the *life of this world*, which we all here count so dear to us ; the *second*, implied in " it," the *real life of man* in a blessed eternity.' That interpretation involves the following reading : ' He that found his earthly life shall lose his real life, and he that lost his earthly life shall find his real life.' That does violence to the passage, takes away the word ' it,' and inserts in place of ' it ' something different. Jesus is drawing no comparison or contrast between an earthly life and a heavenly life, or between a lower and a higher life.

The word 'it' demands an absolute identity ; we must take the saying of Jesus in its simple, natural sense. That done, all difficulty of interpretation disappears. 'He who hath found his life shall lose it : ' there is no escape from death ; we may shrink from meeting it, may live a little longer than if we boldly faced it in a good cause, but the decree of death remains in force, the life we have found ourselves in possession of we shall lose. But they who, for the sake of Jesus, meet death prematurely, will none the less, but only sooner, realise the decree of life, 'he who hath lost his life . . . shall find it.' It would seem that the introduction of the words 'for my sake' is assumed by many readers of the passage, perhaps half unconsciously, and certainly without reason, to restrict its application to those who suffer martyrdom in the cause of Jesus. But if these words had been spoken by any other Teacher, they would never have been understood in that sense. Their natural meaning amounts to no more than this : He who has saved his life by denial of me, must still eventually lose it ; he who has lost his life on my account, will not fail to recover it. Death is inevitable, whether you face it sooner or later ; resurrection to life is certain, die when you may. Because we admit that the influence of Jesus extends beyond the grave, and that he has the power of death and life, it does not follow that in these words he was giving a special promise. If you assume that he was, you make the resurrection to life the privilege of martyrdom, and must at once shrink back appalled from the consequences of your own argument : for you exclude from the privilege all who have not died for the sake of Jesus.

We are not surprised to find Jesus here strengthening the minds of his apostles, by urging them to rely unhesitatingly upon the power of divine providence, which has ordained inevitable death and universal resurrection. This was his method of teaching from the first. He adopted it in the sermon on the Mount, when he blessed the poor, the hungry, the mourners, and pronounced woe upon the rich, the luxurious, the merry-hearted : all in view of God's providential dispensation, which involves alternate trials and compensations, and makes Character the prime factor in working out the problem of human destiny. 6 Luke 20-26

Jesus would have his disciples go forth in the consciousness that they were his representatives, and their reception would be equivalent to the reception of himself. 'He that receiveth you receiveth me.' In the same way, Jesus being the messenger of Another, the reception of the messenger was tantamount to the reception of the Sender : 'and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.' 19 Mat. 40  
 The acceptance of a teacher, as a teacher, would be the means of acquiring the truths he came to teach. 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.' ,, 40  
 A preacher of righteousness also would impart to his adherents the moral rectitude which was the animating principle of his own life and labour. 'And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.' ,, 41  
 The drift of these observations of Jesus appears to be this : Every teacher of truth and rectitude becomes a blessing to such of his fellow men as appreciate his character and receive his instruction ; and the benefit conferred accords with and is restricted to the nature and scope of



the teacher's knowledge and influence. The prophet and the moralist have nothing to offer in the shape of worldly wealth or advancement; their gifts are like their aims, spiritual and transcendental. And to make their labours fruitful, there must be a bond of sympathy between them and those they essay to teach: the prophet must be received 'in the name of a prophet,' and the righteous man 'in the name of a righteous man.' No self-assertive claim to teach can gain the reverence of a disciple; either he must feel conscious of the preacher's spiritual power and mastery over him, or he will be a mere listener to harangues as barren as they are wordy.

10 Mat. 42

Jesus was not unmindful of the comparative insignificance and disesteem attaching to his apostles in the eyes of the world. After alluding to recognised prophets and righteous men, he speaks of his disciples as 'little ones.' 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Their claim to consideration was the fact that they were 'disciples' of Jesus. Men might fail to discern in them any other title to respect, but the slightest assistance given them on that ground, 'in the name of a disciple,' would draw down a blessing on the giver's head. Alford, however, did not so understand the passage, and, to our surprise, confesses his total inability to comprehend the allusion with any certainty. He says: 'To whom this applies is not very clear. Hardly, as some think, to the despised and meanly esteemed for Christ's sake. I should rather imagine some *children* may have been *present*: for of such does our Lord elsewhere use this term, see chap. xviii. 2—6. Though perhaps the expression may be meant of lower and less advanced converts, thus keeping up the gradation from the *prophet*. This, however, hardly seems likely: for how could a disciple be in a downward gradation from a *righteous man*?' To which it may be answered: (1) The question was not about being, but being recognised, as a prophet, a righteous man, a disciple. (2) No one could think of doing service to an actual child 'in the name of a disciple.' (3) If in the passage alluded to the term 'little ones' were applied to 'children' (which cannot be admitted), the sense of that passage would have no connection with an observation made at another time: many of the mistakes and difficulties about the meaning of various passages arise from not viewing each passage wholly and solely in connection with its context.

On the words: 'He shall in no wise lose his reward,' Alford has the note: 'His (*i.e.* the doer's) reward; not, "the reward of *one of these little ones*," as before a *prophet's* reward, a *righteous man's* reward.' Assuming that to be the proper grammatical construction, the sense is not necessarily altered: for in respect of the reward given to the doer of the action, the question applies, By whom? The context would lead unhesitatingly to the conclusion which Alford sets aside. Jesus says nothing here of any reward from himself, or from God, or in heaven, or at a pre-appointed judgment day; because he does so in other places, it by no means follows that the passages are to be taken together, a connection imagined between them which does not exist, and doctrinal inferences drawn which the original utterance of the Speaker's words would not have suggested and cannot justify. Who would presume to interpret the discourses



of any other preacher on such a principle? The meaning of any teacher, and especially of any practised orator, is to be gathered from his sentences as he delivers them, from the train of thought on that particular occasion, without attempting to modify, explain them, or explain them away, by referring to something said on other occasions, prior or subsequent. That fallacious method of interpretation, so largely adopted by men supposed to be 'mighty in the Scriptures,' tends only to hide the truth which it seeks to elucidate; it misleads the judgment, and gives rise to serious and lamentable errors, affecting the simplicity and truth of the gospel and the beliefs, hopes, fears, aims of multitudes who dare not, or cannot, or do not judge for themselves, but take their theology upon trust, regarding it as a heritage to be preserved but never criticised or subjected to an investigation based upon their own common sense and painstaking enquiries. The saddest illustration of this is, perhaps, the dogma of the eucharist, in its varied phases of idolatry, superstition, priestly assumption, transubstantiation, consubstantiation, with their attendant evils of mental and spiritual degradation, delusive hopes, false fears, mysticism, heartburnings, dissensions, persecutions, martyrdoms. This huge mass of error and evil has revolved, century after century in the Christian church, on the small pivot of a wrong interpretation and misapplication of certain texts of Scripture which, having properly no bearing upon each other, have been pieced together to form the basis of doctrines and theories respecting 'the real presence' which have overridden common sense, set at naught the limitations of physical laws and possibilities, and transformed what should be a simple touching memorial feast in honour of our Redeemer, and a binding sacrament of unity among Christians, into an occasion of priestly intolerance, of idolatrous worship, of spiritual terrorism, of delusive expectations, of belief in incredibilities, of theological strife, of abject submission on the part of the weaker members of Christ's church, and of sorrowful abstention, if not of absolute and contemptuous indifference on the part of others.

Having received the instructions of their Master, the twelve disciples went their several ways, preaching and exercising their powers of healing. 'And they departed, and went throughout the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.' It is obvious that the discourses of twelve men on the same subject must differ according to the tones of mind and thought of the respective preachers. This will account for the fact that whereas Luke describes them as 'proclaiming the good news' (Young), Mark says: 'And they went out, and preached that *men* should repent,' or, according to Young, 'that men might reform.' Reformation of character was indissolubly bound up with the good tidings, which were presented under the two aspects of repentance and rejoicing. Luke, again, simply notes the fact that the apostles went 'healing everywhere;' whereas Mark explains: 'And they cast out many devils (Gr. demons) and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.' Why they should have anointed with oil, we know not. It was not the custom of Jesus, or by his direction. There are some minds unwilling to conceive the possibility of any spiritual blessing being imparted except through the medium of a symbol or sacrament.

At an earlier period in the narrative Luke alluded incidentally to

9 Luke 6

6 Mark 12

„ 13

- 3 Luke 19, 20 the imprisonment of the Baptist. 'But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.' Matthew mentions this fact, and relates its consequences. 'For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them which sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given; and he sent and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.' Mark's account of the matter is equally graphic, and he gives a few additional particulars: that Herod had actually married Herodias; that Herodias had set herself against the Baptist, sought his death, but could not bring it about; that Herod still respected John's character, provided for his safe keeping, continued to listen to his preaching, and was moved and charmed by it; that Herod emphasised his promise, so that it included anything up to the half of the kingdom; that the daughter of Herodias left the feast to consult her mother, and then, under her instructions, hurried back to make her strange demand. 'For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John said unto Herod, it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. And Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him; and she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous man and a holy, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was much perplexed; and he heard him gladly. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, and the high captains, and the chief men of Galilee, and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and them that sat at meat with him; and the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went out, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist (Gr. the Baptizer). And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou forthwith give me in a charger the head of John the Baptist (Gr. the Baptizer). And the king was exceeding sorry; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her. And straightway the king sent forth a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring his head: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel gave it to her mother.' The headless trunk of the Baptist was handed over to his disciples, and by them interred with all honour. 'And when his disciples heard *thereof*,

they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.' Matthew adds that after the funeral they told Jesus what had happened. 'And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; 14 Mat. 12 and they went and told Jesus.'

When Jesus had sent forth the twelve apostles in six different directions, he undertook a missionary tour alone. 'And it came to pass, 11 Mat. 1 when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities.' These active measures for the propagation of the gospel naturally excited much public comment. The news was carried to Herod, and his mind was exercised and troubled by the various reports which were set afloat. 'Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done: and he was 9 Luke 7, 8 much perplexed, because that it was said by some, that John was risen from the dead: and by some, that Elijah had appeared; and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.' Herod, at first, knew not what to think, and was anxious to find an opportunity of seeing the great Teacher whose fame was in everyone's mouth, that he might be able to judge for himself. 'And Herod said, John I 9 beheaded: but who is this, about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him.' From the accounts of Matthew and Mark it is to be inferred that eventually Herod came to the conclusion, which he did not hesitate to express, that John the Baptist was indeed risen from the dead. It may have been a salve to the conscience of Herod to persuade himself that his evil deed had thus been neutralized; it may have been a matter of policy with him to accept and endorse the idea. He embraced it with enthusiasm, pointing out that it furnished a satisfactory explanation of powers which were unparalleled and otherwise inexplicable. 'At that season Herod 14 Mat. 1, 2 the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him.' Mark represents Herod as arguing against any other hypothesis. 'And King Herod heard 6 Mark 14-16 thereof; for his name had become known: and he said, John the Baptist (Gr. the Baptizer) is risen from the dead, and therefore do these powers work in him. But others said, It is Elijah. And others said, *It is a prophet, even* as one of the prophets. But Herod, when he heard *thereof*, said, John, whom I beheaded, he is risen.'

The tour of the apostles had been deliberately and carefully planned, as appears from the fact that a set time had been fixed for their return, so that we find them assembled together with Jesus, and giving him an account of the manner in which they had performed the work entrusted to them. 'And the apostles, when they were 9 Luke 10 returned, declared unto him what things they had done.' From Mark we learn that the details furnished to their Master were full and exact, embracing not only the particulars of their labours, but also a summary of their teaching. 'And the apostles gather them- 6 Mark 30 selves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught.' There was much to rejoice their hearts on the occasion of that reunion, but the meeting was saddened by the reception at the same time of the news of the death of the Baptist. This appears from Matthew's account, for after stating that the disciples of John 'went and told Jesus,' he adds, 'Now when Jesus heard *it*, he withdrew from thence in a boat, 14 Mat. 13



to a desert place apart.' That was not the only reason for seeking retirement. They all needed rest, and there was no means of securing it where they were, among an everchanging crowd of people, and with demands upon their attention which encroached even upon their  
6 Mark 31, 32 time for meals. 'And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart.' Luke gives the name  
9 Luke 10 of the place. 'And he took them, and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida.' In the Authorised Version this stands: 'And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.' The alteration has been made in accordance with the Vatican MS. and with the later reading of the Sinaitic MS., the original reading of the latter, before being altered by a later hand, having been 'belonging to a city called Bethsaida.' The  
6 John 1 fourth evangelist does not mention the place, but says: 'After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.' Commenting on Luke, Alford says: 'A great difficulty also attends the mention of Bethsaida here. At first sight, it would appear to be the well-known Bethsaida, on the western bank of the lake, not far from Capernaum. But (1) our Lord was *on this side before*, see ch. viii. 37; and (2) Mark (vi. 45) relates that *after* the miracle of the loaves He caused His disciples to cross over to Bethsaida. But there were *two places* of this name: another Bethsaida (Julius) lay at the top of the lake, on the Jordan. Now it is very likely that our Lord may have crossed the lake to *this* Bethsaida, and St. Luke, finding that the miracle happened near Bethsaida, and *not being informed of the crossing of the lake*, may have left the name thus without explanation, as being that of the other Bethsaida. St. Mark gives us the exact account: that the Lord and the disciples, who went *by sea*, were perceived by the multitude who went *by land*, and arrived before him.' The first inference of Alford, from Luke viii. 37, that Jesus was on the western side before, must be dismissed as unproved. For the narrative in chapters 8 and 9 cannot be considered as consecutive in point of time and place; we are not told where Jesus and his disciples met after their temporary separation. From Mark's account, however, it seems evident that Jesus went by boat to some place on the eastern side of the lake. Did he necessarily pass thither from the western side? Matthew, after mentioning the withdrawal of Jesus by boat, adds: 'And when the multitude heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot (or, by land) from the cities.' Mark intimates that his destination, being known, was at so short a distance that many persons from various cities were able to outstrip the boat by running. 'And *the people* saw them going, and many knew *them*, and they ran together on foot (or, by land) from all the cities and outwent them.' That certainly is not consistent with the idea that Jesus crossed from one side of the lake to the other. To pass from any city on the western side of the lake by land to a place on the eastern side, would have involved a tedious journey and the crossing of a river. Moreover, there seems no good reason for supposing that Luke intended to designate 'the well-known Bethsaida on the western bank of the lake:' his form of expression is just what one would choose to indicate a place comparatively



unknown, 'a city called Bethsaida.' It seems more probable that Jesus was already on the eastern shore, not far from the Bethsaida in question; that he resolved to go by boat to a point a little further north; and that the desert place he sought being a little inland, the people could reach it on foot in a shorter time than he by water. The Gospel of John bears out this idea. He represents Jesus as having already crossed to the other side, and being there followed by a multitude, which agrees with what is said elsewhere of 'many coming and going.' We read: 'And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.' Then the withdrawal to the mountain, equivalent to the desert place, is mentioned, and it would seem that for a short time Jesus was able to enjoy its solitude, surrounded only by his twelve disciples. 'And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.' We are told also: 'Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.' Being festival time, the people were probably making holiday, which suffices to explain why so many of them unhesitatingly left their homes and business to follow the great Teacher. For him and his disciples there was no hope of leisure. The spot they had chosen for retirement was soon discovered, and happening to look up, Jesus became conscious of an approaching crowd. Under ordinary circumstances this would have mattered little; but if they lingered too long in that barren district they would become famished: Jesus must either send them away speedily, or provide them with a meal. From the first moment he seemed to resolve upon the latter, and he indicated as much by a question he put to one of the apostles. 'Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh to him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread (Gr. loaves), that these may eat?' The evangelist expresses his conviction that the enquiry did not proceed from any anxiety or uncertainty in the mind of Jesus, who 'knew what he was about to do' (Young), but was designed to test the apostle. 'And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.' Philip could only give his idea of the probable cost, but had no suggestion to make as to the source from which such a quantity of bread could be obtained. 'Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread (Gr. loaves) is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.' According to a note of the Revisers, the Greek coin mentioned is worth about eight pence half-penny, so that the amount would be about seven pounds sterling. The word is rendered by Young 'denary,' and from 20 Mat. 2 it would appear that a denary was the wage of a day labourer; taking this as equivalent to between two and three shillings, the cost of the two hundred pennyworth of bread would equal from twenty to thirty pounds sterling, which would now suffice to purchase 5,000 small loaves. Having shown by his question to Philip that the necessity for supplying food was fully before his mind, Jesus still took no steps and issued no directions with that object. But he quitted his place of retirement, and devoted himself to the alleviation of the sufferings of the sick among the crowd. 'And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick.' He compassionated not only their bodily infirmities, but their spiritual destitution, comparing them to a shepherdless flock, wandering far

6 John 2

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14 Mat. 14

in search of him, because they had no other spiritual guide who cared to lead them and whom they would care to follow. 'And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.' Luke also describes him as not restricting either his discourses or powers of healing. 'And he welcomed them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing he healed.' The hours sped swiftly. Was Jesus so absorbed in his work as to have forgotten the subject he had discussed with Philip? That might well be, for the people themselves were so eager to hear his word and see his works, that they seemed oblivious of the flight of time and the calls of appetite. So the disciples took upon them to remind Jesus of the fact, to point out the lateness of the hour, the absence of accommodation in the neighbourhood, and to suggest that it would be advisable for him to dismiss the crowd, in order that the people might find their way to the nearest villages and purchase the food of which they were obviously in need. 'And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert; and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food.' Mark's account corresponds very closely. 'And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent: send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat.' Luke is to the same effect, except that he introduces the word 'lodge,' which would apply to those who were too exhausted or too far from home to return that night, or who might even choose to remain and seek Jesus on the next day. 'And the day began to wear away; and the twelve came, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.' They must have been not a little startled at his reply: 'But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat.' That was the sum and substance of his reply. 'But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat.' Matthew adds that he asserted there was no necessity for their going. 'But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.' Seeing then that Jesus was resolved that his disciples should distribute food for a meal to the multitude, they recalled his previous conversation with Philip, and enquired whether it was his wish that they should go and buy, with such money as they had or such credit as they might obtain, the quantity which had been estimated to be necessary. 'And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?' Instead of doing that, he bade them take the trouble to ascertain how many loaves were actually in their possession. 'And he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see.' They did so, and reported the result of the search. 'And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.' They emphasised the scantiness of the supply. 'And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.' That was all they could muster, unless they went and purchased sufficient. 'And they said we have no more than five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy food for all this people.' John's narrative, evidently direct from an eye-witness, is precise, and

brings out a further circumstance. 'One of his disciples, Andrew, <sup>6 John 8, 9</sup> Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two fishes : but what are these among so many ?' This seems to indicate that some enquiry for food was made by the apostles among the crowd. Alford's suggestion is a probable one : 'In the other Gospels, the loaves and fishes appear as the disciples' own ; and we have thus a very simple but very instructive instance of the way in which differences in detail arose. They were their own,—but not till they had bought them.'

Having received the information, Jesus gave instructions that the people should be seated. 'And he commanded the multitudes to sit <sup>14 Mat. 19</sup> down (Gr. recline) on the grass.' Mark adds that they were arranged in order. 'And he commanded them that all should sit down <sup>6 Mark 39, 40</sup> (Gr. recline) by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks by hundreds, and by fifties.' The mention of 'green grass' seems to indicate the fresh spring-growth, not that which had become sun-scorched. And this may also account for some companies numbering twice as many as others, according to the state of the verdure and the formation of the ground. Luke notes the fact that the task of dividing the multitudes into companies was intrusted to the apostles, and that the number chosen for each was fifty, probably to allow of ready access ; the double groups of a hundred each were probably exceptional. 'And he said unto his disciples, <sup>9 Luke 14, 15</sup> Make the men sit down (Gr. recline) in companies about fifty each. And they did so, and made them all sit down (Gr. recline).' The introduction of the word 'about' shows that the requirement was not intended to be needlessly stringent : it would be difficult to control a multitude into an exact arrangement, and the best must be done that was possible under the circumstances. John does not allude to the mode of grouping. He says : 'Jesus said, Make the <sup>6 John 19</sup> people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.' The mode of arrangement rendered the counting of the multitude comparatively easy. The evangelists agree as to the number. Luke says : 'For <sup>9 Luke 14</sup> they were about five thousand men.' Mark : 'And they that ate the <sup>6 Mark 44</sup> loaves were five thousand men.' Matthew : 'And they that did eat <sup>14 Mat. 21</sup> were about five thousand men, beside women and children.' The exclusion of 'women and children' may have arisen from their being served apart, and no note taken of their number. The mingling of the sexes would probably have led to confusion and unseemliness, and the Jews were accustomed to be thus separated on solemn occasions ; the religious discourses of Jesus would naturally be regarded as falling within the rules of the synagogue in that respect, whenever it was desired to enforce them. Alford points out that in John's, 'Make the men sit down,' the general word is used signifying both men and women ; but in, 'So the men sat down, in number about five thousand,' the word used signifies men, as distinguished from women and children. The Revisers have brought out this fact by translating the first word 'people' and the second word 'men ;' and it is to be observed that the other three evangelists make mention only of *men* in numbering them.

Jesus now took into his own hands the loaves and fishes, looked heavenwards, pronounced a blessing in the customary manner, broke



- the food, and passed it into the hands of the disciples, by whom it was handed to those waiting to receive it. 'And he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes.'
- 14 Mat. 19 Mark mentions the division also of the fishes. 'And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.' Luke is precisely to the same effect. 'And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake; and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.' John's account is as follows:
- 6 Mark 41 'Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes.' After the word 'distributed' follow, in the Authorised Version, the words 'to the disciples, and the disciples,' which are omitted by the Revisers in accordance with the oldest MSS. Matthew states that not only did all receive of the food, but every person was fully satisfied. 'And they did all eat, and were filled.' Mark uses the same expression. Luke has the same words: 'And they did eat, and were all filled.' More than that: there was a superfluity of food, which Jesus ordered his disciples to collect. John says: 'And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost. So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten.' Luke notes that fact. 'And there was taken up that which remained over to them of broken pieces, twelve baskets.' Mark states that fish also was left. 'And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes.' Matthew agrees as to the quantity. 'And they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.'
- 9 Luke 16
- 6 John 11
- 14 Mat. 20
- 9 Luke 17
- 6 John 12, 13
- 9 Luke 17
- 6 Mark 43
- 14 Mat. 20

In dealing with the narratives of the Evangelists we need not scruple to combine them in a way which shows that they are not in any point contradictory. Of course no straining of the sense must be attempted with that object: no unprejudiced investigator would either seek to conceal an absolute contradiction, or fail to harmonise the accounts in a reasonable manner. Dean Alford, however, being committed to a belief in the doctrine of Scriptural inspiration, in some sense, however much he sought to modify it, was not unprejudiced, and his extreme honesty of mind and purpose withheld him from attempting reconcilements which might seem to be the outcome of a theory of inspiration. His dread of harmonising and harmonists was somewhat morbid. His note on John (verse 5) is as follows: 'Here there is considerable difficulty, on account of the variation from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who relate that the disciples came to the Lord after He had been teaching and healing the multitudes, and when it was now evening, and asked Him to dismiss the multitudes that they might buy food; whereupon he commanded, "Give ye them to eat;" whereas here apparently, on their first coming, the Lord Himself suggests the question, How they were to be fed, to Philip. This difference is not to be passed over, as it has usually been by English Commentators, without notice. Still less are we to invent improbable and hardly honest harmonistic



shifts to piece the two narratives together. There can be no doubt, fairly and honestly speaking, that the narratives, *in their mere letter*, disagree.' John's narrative is extremely condensed ; it is a record of the sayings of Jesus rather than of his doings ; no mention is made by John of the work of teaching and healing which took place on that day : bearing in mind these obvious facts there is no difficulty in reconciling the four narratives.

Of the miracle itself, what shall we say ? Is it a fiction ? Is it a fact ? If a fact, can any reasonable explanation be imagined ?

There are two kinds of fiction : that which is recognised and intended to be recognised as such, and that which is promulgated as truth, and is intended to be regarded as true. This miracle does not belong to the first kind : it was not put forth as a fiction, and the authors of the gospel histories could not for an instant have desired or supposed that it would be considered a fiction. They have narrated it as a sober truth ; the details are marked by care and accuracy ; and it is bound up with matters of high and solemn interest. There are some fictions which have grown up gradually, have by degrees been added to and embellished, and are believed in as they stand, there being no way of distinguishing the falsehoods from the original truth they have blended with and overlaid. But these simple, clear-cut gospel narratives, with their specific details, cannot be regarded in that light. If fictions, they were deliberately forged with the view to deceive. When ? Why ? Can any possible motive be suggested ? The honesty and good faith of the recorders are obvious and unimpeachable. If we are overwhelmed with wonder at what we read, those present were no less astounded at what they saw. But when the evidence is too strong to admit of gainsaying, the fact must be accepted, however contrary to ordinary experience. Our inability to explain the miracle has no bearing on the question of its authenticity. Five loaves and two fishes, when passed through the hands of Jesus, became enough for the hunger of a multitude : there was an absolute extension and increase of the matter composing the bread and flesh to about a thousand times its original bulk. Whence could that increase come ? Let us remember that we are never astounded by the increase of fish in the sea. Huge shoals are generated in the natural way, and we never pause to marvel. But the question equally applies : Whence does that increase of fish-flesh come ? Obviously, out of the element in which the fish live. It must be living flesh, we know ; but we only know as a fact, not as a reason, that by mere contact of life with life, a process is set on foot, by which certain elements in the water build up the matter which forms a fish. Look at a grain of wheat. How should it ever become more than a grain of wheat ? But we know that, being planted in the earth, it produces a hundred grains. Here again is an extension and increase of matter. Whence does the increase come ? Out of the surrounding elements : the earth, the air, the rain ; these are transmuted into wheat-flesh. But to effect the transformation, the seed must be buried in the earth : the touch of the soil does for it what the touch of Jesus did for the food. We can no more unravel the origin of the one mystery than of the other. Nor need our faith be staggered by the instantaneousness of the increase in the hands of Jesus. The growth of things before our eyes is slow or

rapid, we know not why. We only know that in every case the increase of matter must be preceded by some act of contact, the effect of which is to set on foot a process of vitalizing energy, by which invisible elements become transformed into solid substances, and something is brought into visible, tangible existence which before, to human eyes and human consciousness, had no existence. It is not to be supposed that Jesus worked this miracle, or any of his miracles, except through the operation of natural laws. He was not a conjurer, deceiving the senses of beholders. He was not a magician, such as we read of in fairy tales, working marvels by cabalistic signs or words. But he had a knowledge of mysteries beyond our ken, powers of insight denied to us, peculiar indwelling energies and intuitions, which gave him a mastery over Nature, and enabled him to wield the subtle laws of the material universe in ways which, to the present day, remain to us inexplicable.

Some years after this was written there appeared in the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of 6 October, 1891, the following extracts from a contribution to the 'Agnostic Annual' by Professor Huxley. 'I am unaware of anything that has a right to the title of an "impossibility" except a contradiction in terms. There are impossibilities logical, but none natural. A "round square," a "present past," "two parallel lines that intersect," are impossibilities, because the ideas denoted by the predicates, round, present, intersect, are contradictory of the ideas denoted by the subjects, square, past, parallel. But walking on water, or turning water into wine, or procreation without male intervention, or raising the dead, are plainly not "impossibilities" in this sense. In the affirmation that a man walked upon water, the idea of the subject is not contradictory of that in the predicate. Naturalists are familiar with insects which walk on water, and imagination has no more difficulty in putting a man in place of the insect than it has in giving a man some of the attributes of a bird and making an angel of him; or in ascribing to him the ascensive tendencies of a balloon, as the "levitationists" do. Undoubtedly, there are very strong physical and biological arguments for thinking it extremely improbable that a man could be supported on the surface of water as the insect is; or that his organization could be compatible with the possession and use of wings; or that he could rise through the air without mechanical aid . . . But it is sufficiently obvious, not only that we are at the beginning of our knowledge of nature, instead of having arrived at the end of it, but that the limitations of our faculties are such that we never can be in a position to set bounds to the possibilities of nature. The same considerations apply to the other examples of supposed miraculous events. The change of water into wine undoubtedly implies a contradiction, and is assuredly "impossible," if we are permitted to assume that the "elementary bodies" of the chemists are now and for ever immutable. Not only, however, is a negative proposition of this kind incapable of proof, but modern chemistry is inclining towards the contrary doctrine. And if carbon can be got out of hydrogen or oxygen, the conversion of water into wine comes within range of scientific possibility—it becomes a mere question of molecular arrangement. As for virgin procreation, it is not only clearly imaginable, but modern biology recognizes it as an every-day occur-

rence among some groups of animals. So with restoration to life after death. It may be urged, however, that there is, at any rate, one miracle certified by all three of the Synoptic gospels which really does "imply a contradiction," and is, therefore, "impossible" in the strictest sense of the word. This is the well-known story of the feeding of several thousand men, to the complete satisfaction of their hunger, by the distribution of a few loaves and fishes among them; the wondrousness of this already somewhat surprising performance being intensified by the assertion that the quantity of the fragments of the meal left over amounted to much more than the original store . . . Thus we are face to face with a dilemma the way of escape from which is not obvious. Either the "four thousand" and the "five thousand" stories are both historically true, and describe two separate events; or the first and second gospels testify to the very words of a conversation between Jesus and his disciples which cannot have been uttered. My choice between these alternatives is determined by no *a priori* speculations about the possibility or impossibility of such events as the feeding of the four or of the five thousand. But I ask myself the question, What evidence ought to be produced before I could feel justified in saying that I believed such an event to have occurred? That question is very easily answered. Proof must be given (1) of the weight of the loaves and fishes at starting; (2) of the distribution to 4—5000 persons, without any additional supply, of this quantity and quality of food; (3) of the satisfaction of these people's appetites; (4) of the weight and quality of the fragments gathered up into the baskets. Whatever my present notions of probability and improbability may be, satisfactory testimony under these four heads would lead me to believe that they were erroneous, and I should accept the so-called miracle as a new and unexpected example of the possibilities of nature.' On the four points mentioned by Professor Huxley the disciples had ample opportunities of judging.

Immediately after the performance of the miracle, Jesus insisted that his apostles should go by themselves to the other side of the lake, while he took upon himself the task of dismissing the multitude. 'And straightway he constrained his disciples to enter into the boat, <sup>6 Mark 45</sup> and to go before *him* to the other side to Bethsaida, while he himself sendeth the multitude away.' What is the meaning of the expression, 'the other side to Bethsaida?' It may signify either, 'the contrary side to Bethsaida,' or, by inserting a comma, which Young has done, 'the other side, to Bethsaida.' If the latter be the correct sense, the Bethsaida cannot be the one alluded to in 9 Luke 10, which was probably Bethsaida Julius. We must not, however, lose sight of the word 'before,' which indicates that Jesus designed to follow them. In Luther's translation the expression is not strong enough to denote the other side: 'und vor ihm hinüber führen gen Bethsaida.' This seems to mean 'towards' Bethsaida, which would be the 'city called Bethsaida,' near to which was the desert place which Jesus had chosen for his retirement. The word *pros*, rendered 'to,' also signifies 'towards.' So the sense may be this: the disciples were to skirt the shore towards the city in their boat, while Jesus dismissed the people and followed by land on foot. Matthew's account is as follows: 'And straightway he constrained the disciples <sup>14 Mat. 22</sup>



to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away.' Here, again, Luther's translation is not 'to the other side,' but, 'und vor ihm herüber führen,' 'and go over before him.' The word 'till' indicates that the sole object of Jesus was to be separated from the apostles until he had got rid of the crowd, after which he could join them. The reason for this appears from John's account: 'When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world. Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.' The intense enthusiasm of the people needed to be restrained. They had come to the conclusion that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah, and they were prepared to go to any length in expressing their confidence in him and their devotion to him. Such an ovation was far from his desire, and he shrank from any leadership of the people based upon their election and coinciding with the national ambition. Probably Jesus found considerable difficulty in controlling and parting from the crowd; but as soon as he had fairly taken leave of them he was glad to find refuge in solitude and prayer. 'And after he had taken leave of them, he departed into the mountain to pray,' ascending it for the purpose of more complete retirement: 'And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray.' Probably Jesus informed the people of his intention, and urged it upon them as an argument for letting him depart.

The fourth evangelist says nothing about the enforced departure of the disciples in the boat towards Bethsaida, but he records as follows. 'And when evening came, his disciples went down unto the sea; and they entered into a boat, and were going over the sea unto Capernaum.' This appears to refer to a somewhat later period of the day; nothing is said of any compulsion of the disciples; they are represented as voluntarily going down to the shore, entering the boat, and going over the sea, not towards Bethsaida, as before, but to Capernaum. The most reasonable inference from the combined narratives seems to be this: The disciples were compelled to leave before the dispersion of the crowd; while Jesus was engaged in that task they had gone towards Bethsaida, landed, and waited for him. Eventually, they re-entered the boat, and directed their course towards Capernaum, which was directly opposite to the desert of Bethsaida. The evangelist adds: 'And it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.' It is obvious from this that they had been expecting Jesus, but as the night had fallen they gave up the hope of his rejoining them for some hours, and they resolved to make the journey of three or four miles across the lake, probably intending to return in search of Jesus in the early morning. But the wind was blowing fiercely, and the sea was rising with it. 'And the sea was rising by reason of a great wind that blew.' The wind, moreover, was in their teeth, and when they were at such a distance from the shore as to be exposed to its full force, their boat laboured heavily. 'And when even was come, he was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.' The lake is forty furlongs wide (Alford), and when the disciples had covered the greater part of the distance, they

John 14, 15

4 Mark 46

14 Mat. 23

4 John 16, 17

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14 Mat. 23, 24



were amazed by the sudden appearing and gradual approach of Jesus. ‘When therefore they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat.’ Matthew states the time. ‘And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea.’ This would be (Alford) between 3 and 6 in the morning. Mark confirms this statement. ‘And when even was come, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea.’ When he overtook the boat he did not attempt to stop, his apparent intention being to pass beyond them: ‘and he would have passed by them.’ On this simple statement of fact Alford quotes the following exclamation: ‘A silent note of Inspiration. He was about to pass by them. He intended so to do. But what man could say this? Who knoweth the mind of Christ but the Spirit of God? Compare 1 Cor. ii. 11, Wordsw.’ To this Alford makes the temperate rejoinder: ‘But it may perhaps be doubted whether this is quite a safe or a sober comment.’ The doctrine of Inspiration here shows itself in its true light. It is not based upon any claim made by the evangelists themselves, but it is merely an inference deduced from bringing into juxtaposition passages of Scripture which have properly no bearing upon each other. It is assumed that a promise of supernatural aid was given to the apostles for the purpose of remembering (and recording) his words (and actions); it is further assumed that Mark and Luke, not being apostles, were similarly inspired; it is assumed also that an observation made by Paul with respect to the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures applies to the gospels, which had not then been compiled; it is assumed, again, that the inspiration extends to every letter written by an apostle, and to all the epistles of Paul, who never asserted such a thing himself; and the doctrine is upheld by arguments on a par with that which Dean Alford felt himself compelled to rebuke.

John states that the disciples were terrified, as well they might be, at such an undreamt of prodigy. ‘And they were afraid.’ Matthew states that they deemed it some ghostly apparition, and actually cried out in terror at its approach. ‘And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is an apparition; and they cried out for fear.’ Mark adds that they all saw the strange sight, so there could be no question as to its reality: the eyes and the imaginations of twelve men could not deceive them simultaneously. ‘But they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was an apparition, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled.’ The Revisers have altered ‘spirit’ to ‘apparition.’ The Greek word *phantasma* (lit. a phantom) occurs only in these two passages. But Jesus did not let them remain in doubt and fear. They soon heard his well-known voice. ‘But he said unto them, It is I; be not afraid.’ They were encouraged not only by his tone, but by his words. ‘But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.’ ‘But he straightway spake with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.’ Reassured by the voice of Jesus, Peter passed from abject fear to the extreme of confidence. Convinced that it was his Master,

all dread was gone, and he called across the waves that if only Jesus bade him, he was bold enough to join him on the sea. 'And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters.' Jesus evidently did not deem the task either impossible or rash, but unhesitatingly and cordially invited Peter to attempt it. 'And he said, Come.' There was no shrinking back on the part of the apostle. He let himself down by the boat's side, placed his feet upon the waves, and actually walked upon them in the direction of Jesus. 'And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus.' Let us not trifle with the narrative. It is not hinted that the attempt merely was made, but it is stated plainly that it succeeded. The Vatican MS. and other ancient authorities even read, 'and came to Jesus.' But becoming conscious of the immense force of the wind, the apostle lost nerve ; thereupon he began to sink, and feeling himself helpless he cried out to Jesus to save him. 'But when he saw the wind, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me.' He had lost confidence in himself, but not in his Master. The curious expression, 'saw the wind,' appears to have puzzled scribes and commentators. Many ancient authorities add 'strong.' In the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. the word 'boisterous' was inserted by a later hand ; but the Revisers, laudably zealous for accuracy, have restored the original reading. Those two upon the sea were now within reach of each other, and without delaying a moment Jesus grasped and upheld the disciple. 'And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him.' The words with which the action was accompanied claim careful consideration : 'and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?' The faith which had emboldened Peter to step out upon the sea, might well be deemed great ; but suddenly it lessened, failed, turned into doubt. What had Peter doubted ? Not the personality of Jesus, for he still calls him 'Lord' ; not the power or willingness of Jesus to help him, or he would not have cried to him 'save me.' He had simply doubted his own ability to continue on his course ; and the loss of moral courage had made the physical feat impracticable. There is nothing strange in that ; it is a fact within the range of our own observation. It is just the difference between one who can swim and one who cannot. We call the lack of faith 'want of presence of mind,' but the physical effects of confidence and of doubt are as obvious now in daily experience as they were then in the case of Peter. The bold swimmer can tread the water, and float upon it at his ease, whereas one who has no confidence in himself and in the buoyant power of the element in which he is unpractised, will sink like a stone. It is refreshing to find Dean Alford taking this simple, natural view of the circumstance recorded. Alluding to this narrative he says : 'It contains one of the most pointed and striking revelations which we have of the nature and analogy of faith ; and a notable example of the power of the higher spiritual state of man over the inferior laws of matter, so often brought forward by our Lord. See ch. xvii. 20, xxi. 21.'

Only Matthew records this account of Peter's faith and failure. John simply tells us that, reassured by the voice of Jesus, the disciples joyfully received him into the boat. 'They were willing

therefore to receive him into the boat.' Mark says : 'And he went up 6 Mark 51  
unto them into the boat ; and the wind ceased.' Matthew confirms  
this sudden lulling of the wind. 'And when they were gone up into 14 Mat. 32  
the boat, the wind ceased.' The bare fact is stated, without attempt  
at explanation or inference ; but the opportuneness of the circum-  
stance indicates its connection with the miraculous walk of Jesus  
upon the sea. It is most reasonable to suppose that all his astounding  
works were wrought, not as is so often unwarrantably assumed, in  
opposition to the laws of nature, but by the operation of recondite  
laws of cause and effect familiar to the mind of Jesus, however strange  
and abnormal they might appear to the rest of mankind. The time  
he chose for the miracle was when 'the sea was rising by reason of  
a great wind that blew.' That wind may have been needful for his  
passage across the sea, just as a swimmer needs water for his support,  
and would never attempt to cross a chasm filled only with air. The  
hurricane may have been sent for the express purpose of facilitating  
the course of Jesus ; nay, he may have raised it himself, for we are  
told that on another occasion the wind obeyed his voice. Of the why  
and wherefore of such things we can say nothing : why Jesus took  
the loaves and fishes into his own hands ; why he touched lepers ;  
why healing streamed from his person and clothes ; why he put his  
fingers into the ears of the deaf ; why he anointed the eyes of a blind  
man with clay mixed with saliva ; why he breathed upon his disciples  
when he said, 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit.' But we may be con-  
fident that each mode of operation was suited to the occasion, and we  
are no more justified in assuming that such actions were merely  
emblematical, than we should be in supposing that the telegraph  
wire, through which marvels of electricity are performed, is set up by  
men of science as a mere outward token and symbol of its hidden  
mysteries.

Mark alludes to the intense astonishment caused by the miracle in  
the minds of the disciples. 'And they were sore amazed in them- 6 Mark 52  
selves.' The words 'beyond measure, and wondered' are omitted by  
the Revisers, not being found in the two oldest MSS. The sentence  
which follows is not easily understood. In the Authorised Version  
it stands : 'For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves : for  
their heart was hardened.' This is now rendered : 'For they under-  
stood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened.'  
Tischendorf : 'For they understood not the matter of the loaves, but  
their heart was hardened.' Young : 'For they understood not con-  
cerning the loaves, for their heart hath been hard.' If the original  
admits of the word 'hard' instead of 'hardened,' it seems obvious  
that the allusion is to the characteristic impenetrability of mind dis-  
played by the apostles, their lack of comprehension and dulness of  
perception. Alford's explanation appears apposite and just. 'They  
did not from the miracle (of the loaves) which they had seen, infer  
the power of the Lord over nature.' Hence their amazement at  
witnessing the unexampled feat of walking on the sea, which involved  
a mastery over the laws of nature not one whit more wonderful than  
the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

Matthew states that those in the boat not only welcomed but  
worshipped Jesus. 'And they that were in the boat worshipped 14 Mat. 33  
him.' Young renders : 'And those in the boat having come, bowed



14 Mat. 33

to him : ' they offered to him that external mark of homage with which men were accustomed to salute those of highest rank. And they accompanied the action with words which exalted him beyond all ordinary human beings : ' saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.' One who could work such wonders was of no common, human parentage ; in some mysterious way he participated in the divine power which rules the universe and sways the laws of nature.

6 John 21

John closes his account by saying, ' And straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going.' The meaning of the words is open to doubt. Alford's comment is as follows : ' The ship in a comparatively short time (or perhaps *immediately by miracle*, but I prefer the other) was at the land to which they had been going, viz., by the storm ceasing, and the ship making smooth way.' The expression ' the boat was at the land ' may be understood to mean, ' the boat was found to be at the land,' but Young's rendering does not admit of that idea, and strengthens Alford's view : ' And immediately the boat came to the land to which they were going.'

14 Mat. 34

6 Mark 53

The word *egeneto*, which is rendered ' was,' is from the verb *ginomai*, and is the same as in verse 25 : ' Rabbi, when *camest* thou hither ? ' and it often occurs in the expression ' it *came to pass*.' The lake at that part is less than four miles wide ; the disciples, even against the wind, had rowed more than half the distance before they first caught sight of Jesus ; the ceasing of the storm facilitated the passage over the short remaining distance. John's words seems to imply no more than that : the boat *came* to the land whither *they were going*. The accounts of the other evangelists forbid the idea of any miracle with respect to the passage of the boat. Matthew says, in the most simple, natural way : ' And when they had crossed over, they came to the land, unto Gennesaret.' Mark's words describe an ordinary crossing, arrival and mooring : ' And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.'

,, 54, 55

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Immediately on his arrival Jesus was recognised, and there was great excitement in the neighbourhood. The people hastened hither and thither with the news of his coming, and sick persons were brought out, even lying on their beds, and carried to the place where it had been ascertained that Jesus was staying. ' And when they were come out of the boat, straightway *the people* knew him, and ran round about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.' The narrative represents Jesus as making a wide circuit, for mention is made of his entering villages, cities and country places. Wherever he went, invalids from the surrounding neighbourhood were to be seen lying together in the market places, which were doubtless chosen as affording most space and being best known. Even then there was some difficulty in bringing every case to the notice of Jesus, for the people are represented as importuning him to come within reach, in order that the sick might touch him. Absolute contact with his person was found to be unnecessary, but he was implored to allow his garment to be grasped, no matter where, for health streamed forth at the mere touching of its hem. ' And wheresoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid



the sick in the market places, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him (or, it) were made whole.' The scene thus graphically brought before us is a very strange one. These cures were effected without restriction: there was no enquiry as to the nature and cause of the disease, as to its extent or duration. No case was hopeless; but one condition was imperative: the invalid must touch the healer. Probably among such a crowd some may have been unable from weakness or otherwise to do this; if so, as far as we are informed, there was no recovery: 'as many as touched were made whole.' It was essential there should be this physical contact; and as the act was voluntary, it indicated a mental state, the existence of that 'faith' which we find, on various occasions, declared to be necessary for healing. Had Jesus placed his hands upon the sick, it might have been necessary for him, at least in cases where the indications of faith were not sufficiently apparent, to put the question, 'Believe ye <sup>9 Mat. 28</sup> that I am able to do this?' or to qualify the action with the words, 'According to your faith be it unto you.' But no amount of faith <sup>20</sup> was sufficient apart from contact: we must deal with the narrative as we find it, noting well the limitations and conditions attached by the evangelists to the cures wrought by Jesus. Is it not obvious that they were all effected in accordance with certain natural laws, which appear to us mysterious and irregular only because we are ignorant of their scientific basis and unaccustomed to their manifestation? That sparks and shocks should issue from an electrical machine upon its being touched, is a fact only made credible to us by experiment and experience. The career of Jesus has brought into evidence some few of those hidden sources of power and influence which can be developed from the subtle blending and interfusion of spirit with matter; he has shown us the infinite possibilities surrounding us in the material and spiritual world; and when his sayings on these matters come to be pondered in their obvious, natural, unperverted sense, we shall understand his emphatic assertions with respect to the unlimited and illimitable powers of the Human Will, acting in accordance with the Divine Will, on material things and physical laws.

We find Matthew's narrative in accordance with that of Mark: the wording here is so nearly alike as to countenance the suggestion that the gospels were based upon a 'common tradition,' although the passage is too short to justify an argument therefrom to that effect. 'And when the men of that place knew him, they sent into all that region round about, and brought unto him all that were sick; and they besought him that they might only touch the border of his garment: and as many as touched were made whole.' These events are not alluded to by either Luke or John, but the latter supplies a careful detail of what followed immediately after the miracle of the food and the crossing of the sea by Jesus. The multitude, although dismissed by him on the previous evening, had not finally dispersed. A crowd assembled on the next day, and stood in expectation of his coming, knowing that his disciples had gone away without him in the boat, and that there was only one other boat there, which still remained on the spot. 'On the morrow the multitude which <sup>14 Mat. 35, 36</sup> stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat <sup>6 John 22</sup>

(Gr. little boat) there, save one, and that Jesus entered not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples went away alone.' This differs from the Authorised Version, which is as follows: 'The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone . . .' The Tauchnitz edition gives the verse as it stands in the Sinaitic MS., which is to the same effect, omitting only the words 'when' and 'one.' But the Vatican and Alexandrine MSS. read 'save one' instead of 'save that one,' and omit 'whereinto his disciples were entered.' The Revisers appear to have rejected the Sinaitic reading, and they bring out the fact that only one 'little boat' remained in the place, and that the disciples had gone away in the 'boat,' not 'little boat.' Tischendorf emphasises the distinction by using the word 'ship': 'The next day the multitude standing on the opposite shore of the sea saw that there was none other boat there save one, and that Jesus did not enter with his disciples into the ship, but his disciples went away alone.' The word 'saw' is rendered by Young, 'having seen.' The import of the passage seems to be this: Jesus did not go in the large boat with his disciples, neither had he gone alone in the only little boat which was there; therefore the multitude waited, supposing him to be still in the neighbourhood. The evangelist, however, here explains that at no great distance from the scene of the miracle of the previous day, there was a place to which small boats came from Tiberias, which town was on the other side of the lake, about 10 miles to the south. '(Howbeit there came boats (Gr. little boats) from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks).' Here again the Revisers have rejected the following rendering of the Sinaitic MS. given by Von Tischendorf: 'When therefore the boats came from Tiberias, which was nigh *unto* where they did also eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.' The introduction of the words 'which was' before 'nigh' contradicts the tenor of the narrative. It is easy to understand how such an error might be inserted by a copyist more careful about grammar than conversant with geography. For instance: 'Boats came from Richmond near to the place whence the barge started:': a transcriber ignorant of the localities might take for granted that it was meant that Richmond was near to the place, and insert the words 'which was,' whereas the writer intended it to be understood that the boats came *from* Richmond near *to* the place.

The multitude waited in vain; they were unable to find any trace of Jesus or his disciples. Had the boat put back for Jesus, and taken him away secretly? They were bent on ascertaining what had become of him, and were desirous of again meeting him, possibly with the object of carrying out their purpose to make him king. They therefore availed themselves of the boats which came from Tiberias, and crossed over to Capernaum. 'When the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the boats (Gr. little boats), and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.' The fact that it was the time of the great national holiday of the passover is sufficient to account for their employing their leisure in this way.

On finding Jesus, the first question put to him, for the satisfaction of the curiosity of the multitude, was as to when he had crossed over the lake: the 'when' involved the 'how.' 'And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?' Jesus addressed them somewhat sternly. He discerned and exposed the low motive which had induced them thus to follow and search after him. It was not because he had given miraculous attestations of his authority as a Teacher, but because his miracle had supplied their material wants: they craved no higher satisfaction than that of the bodily appetite. 'Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled.' Young renders the last word 'satisfied,' which gives a shade of meaning otherwise lost. Jesus would have them actuated by higher, spiritual motives. He called them to a new work and a new food. That which came as the reward of their earthly labour, and sustained their bodily existence, had no more permanent value; it was of a perishable nature, and they needed a form of nourishment which would last them not for a few days or years, but for an age. 'Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life,' rendered by Young: 'Work not for the food which is perishing, but for the food which is abiding to life age-during.' That was indeed a lofty doctrine to set before the minds of the multitude. Yet not only was this age-during life the common heritage of humanity, but a human Being would dispense the nourishment which must uphold it: 'which the Son of man shall give unto you.' Tischendorf, adopting the reading of the Sinaitic MS., renders, 'which the Son of man gives unto you.' From a comparison of passages it has been ascertained that the terms 'Son of man' and 'Christ' were used interchangeably; therefore the statement of Jesus would be understood by the hearers as a declaration that the expected Messiah would provide the nourishment in question. Jesus added that the Son of man was divinely appointed, 'sealed,' for that purpose: 'for him the Father, *even* God, hath sealed,' rendered by Young, Tischendorf and Alford, 'For him the Father sealed, *even* God.' The strict literal rendering would be: 'For him the Father sealed, the God.' The word '*even*' supplies, in fact, the place of the definite article, which in Greek often stands before words when it is omitted by translators, as being contrary to the genius of modern language. For instance: the original stands in verse 28, 'the works of the God,' in verse 34, 'the this bread,' in verse 35, 'the bread of the life,' in the opening verse of John's Gospel, 'the Word was with the God,' and in the 19th verse of that chapter, 'the witness of the John.'

Taking literally the command of Jesus to 'work' for the imperishable food, his hearers questioned him as to the nature of the work required. 'They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God?' The question was as to 'works,' a course of action. Jesus mentioned in reply one duty specially imposed on them by God, that of having confidence in his Messenger. 'Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent (or, he sent).' This being an



6 John 30

unmistakable allusion to Jesus himself, they took upon them to ask him by what sign he authenticated his divine mission : what prodigy did he perform that they might thereby discern his authority and believe his teaching ? ‘They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee ? what workest thou ?’ And they added to their question the observation that his miracle of providing food, their eagerness for the repetition of which he had just reproached them with, was precisely such as their ancestors had witnessed in the wilderness and been supported by. ‘Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness ; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.’ The quotation appears to refer to a Psalm of Asaph.

78 Ps. 23, 24

‘Yet he commanded the skies above,  
And opened the doors of heaven ;  
And he rained down manna upon them to eat,  
And gave them of the corn of heaven.’

6 John 32

,, 32, 33

Jesus repudiated with great earnestness the inference drawn by them from the Scripture, and reminded them that the manna did not pass through the hands of Moses, and was not provided by him for the people, having been ‘rained down’ from the skies at God’s command. ‘Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven.’ Instead of thus misreading the past, Jesus bade them consider that God was giving to them at present the real bread from heaven, inasmuch as that which comes down from heaven and gives life to mankind is, in truth, the bread of God : ‘but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.’ The rendering of Tischendorf, ‘Moses hath not given you the bread from heaven,’ does not indicate any correction by Jesus of an error as to the question of the giving of the bread by Moses, but seems rather to assert that what he gave was not ‘the bread from heaven.’ The Revisers, however, have altered, ‘Moses gave you not’ to, ‘It was not Moses that gave you.’ The literal translation and order of the words in the original is shown in the ‘Englishman’s Greek New Testament’ : ‘Not Moses has given you the bread out of the heaven but my Father gives you the bread out of the heaven the true.’ In the Introduction to that work it is stated : ‘There is no authority anywhere for the punctuation. There are few or no points in the ancient copies, and editors naturally differ in their system of pointing. We have been obliged to punctuate for ourselves as we judged best.’ The reading of verse 33 in the Authorised Version, ‘For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven,’ is discredited by most modern translators, who render ‘he’ by ‘that.’ Luther renders ‘diess,’ ‘this.’

The Jews understood Jesus to speak of another kind of bread than that supplied in the desert, equally from heaven, but superior, the ‘true bread’ ; and they asked Jesus to keep them always supplied in future with the bread he thus described. Alford says : ‘The Jews understand this bread, as the Samaritan woman understood the water, to be some miraculous kind of sustenance which would bestow life everlasting : perhaps they thought of the heavenly manna, which the Rabbis speak of as prepared for the just in the future world.’ This interpretation of his words is not to be wondered at, remembering



the miraculous supply of food which Jesus had given them on the day before. 'They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.' The simpler rendering of Young is preferable: 'Sir, always give us this bread.' 6 John 34

Then Jesus explained to them the meaning of the simile: the 'bread' represented himself. 'Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.' He would prove food and drink to disciples and believers: 'he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' There is no distinction in the original between 'not' and 'never,' *ou mē*, 'not' or 'in no wise,' being in both places. This was equivalent to saying that every want and every aspiration of humanity would be satisfied through Jesus. But he had already had occasion to charge them with unbelief in him in face of clearest evidence. 'But I said unto you, that ye have seen me, and yet believe not.' Why the Revisers have omitted 'also,' *kai*, after 'ye,' and have inserted the word 'yet,' but not in italics, does not appear. Young renders: 'Ye have both seen me, and believe not'; Alford: 'Ye have even seen me, and believe not'; Tischendorf: 'Ye have even seen, and believe not': he follows the two oldest MSS. in omitting the word 'me.' „ 35

According to the Authorised Version Jesus continued: 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.' Young gives that as the literal rendering, but the German Version shows, which the literal English does not, that the word 'all' is neuter: 'Alles was mir mein Vater giebt, das kommt zu mir.' The Revisers have brought out that fact by rendering the passage, 'All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me.' Jesus had been speaking of persons: 'He that cometh to me,' but he now seems to allude to things or events, as though he had said, 'All that the Father gives me, your unbelief and rejection as well as faith and acknowledgment, will come to me.' The verb rendered 'come' is *hēkō*, the same as in the passage: 'All these things shall come upon this generation.' Alford suggests a different explanation: 'In our Lord's discourses, that, which the Father hath given him, is spoken of in the singular number and neuter gender, "all that which": whereas they who come to Him, the Son, are spoken of in the masculine gender, and sometimes also in the plural number: "every man," or "all they." The Father hath given to the Son as it were one mass, that all whom he hath given should be one: that whole mass the Son unfoldeth one by one in this following out of the Father's design. Hence also that which we read in ch. xvii. 2, "that all that which Thou hast given him (so literally), to them He may give eternal life." We have here also the same quick transition from the neuter to the masculine, for Jesus immediately adds: "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"; which Young renders: "and him who is coming to me, I may not by any means cast out." It was not for him to show preferences or aversions; he stood forth as 'Son of man' to attract humanity, and the loadstone might as soon shake off the iron which rushes towards and clings to it, as he reject the soul which yields to his influence. His own willingness or unwillingness did not enter into the question: he had not come to exercise any will of his own, but dutifully to obey the will of him whose messenger he was. 'For I am come down from „ 36

heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.' Jesus here makes, in plainest words, a very startling statement: 'I am come down from heaven.' The opening chapters of Matthew and Luke disclose his supernatural origin and birth; this observation of Jesus proves that he had a full and perfect consciousness of the fact. How or when it came to him, none can say. The infant mind may have opened simultaneously to impressions of earth and reminiscences of heaven. In childhood he startled his mother by the knowledge of himself and his origin displayed in the question, 'Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?' A voice from heaven testified to the Baptist that he was the Son of God; that truth was recognised by the Tempter, and Jesus must have entered upon his ministry in complete conviction of his heavenly origin. The nature of Jesus, as presented to us by the evangelists, is that of a man in all points like ourselves, the only difference—a vast one, indeed—being that he had had a prior existence in heaven. The earthly life of Jesus is perfectly consistent with such conceptions of him. He had an insight which was more than human; a knowledge and mastery over the mysteries of nature which enabled him to work miracles of many kinds; a power and mode of thought and expression which place his teachings above the loftiest flights of genius in other men, the Sermon on the Mount being in itself sufficient to reveal the supermundane ideas, motives, aims, experiences and convictions of the Speaker's mind, his doctrines and exhortations being obviously seeds of celestial origin, exotics transplanted from above into the hard soil and uncongenial atmosphere of this rude, rough world of ours, teachings which impel men to live on earth as in the near and certain sight of heaven, to the reversal of all prior human judgments and the ennobling of all earthly ambitions. But we are not left to our own inferences in dealing with this question. The positive assertions of Jesus respecting himself, his pre-existence, his knowledge of heavenly things, his relationship to the Father in heaven, agree with and corroborate the gospel records of his miraculous birth and heavenly origin. It is not to be supposed that the majestic and astounding eulogy of Jesus with which the fourth gospel opens was made by the evangelist without full warrant and absolute conviction. His narrative supplies in its course the evidence on which such conclusions rested: the statements of Jesus himself explain and justify them. Such discourses as his have never been, before or since, and could never be, uttered by any other human lips. Performing miracles which, but for their performance, would be deemed incredible; delivering a consistent code of moral teaching, simple yet sublime, and reaching far above the highest strain of philosophical research: when he comes to speak about himself, with firm, unfaltering accents he claims Sonship to the heavenly Father, and declares in the astounded ears of the listening multitude: 'I have come down out of the heaven.' All is of a piece in these wondrous gospel histories: the angel visits which foretold his birth; the angelic carol which resounded in the sky; the inspired prophecies of righteous men and women, some standing on the utmost verge of earthly life; the Baptist's testimony; the sign and voice from heaven; the life, the aims, the works, the sayings, the death, the resurrection, the ascension of Jesus: all are in perfect harmony. The gospel narratives are transparently honest:

it were as easy to imagine deception in an infant's smile as to assume fraud in their compilers. The life of Jesus, as recorded by them, was a pure and pattern life ; his daily labour of love teemed with marvels of mercy ; and the closer our criticism of his teachings, the deeper grows our admiration, constraining us to say, with those who heard him, 'Never man spake like this man.' Who else could utter a saying so sublime in self-assertiveness, so deep in self-surrender, as the one before us : 'For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me ?'

And his conception and definition of that divine Will involved momentous issues. Jesus had been speaking of 'all that which the Father giveth' him, and which in consequence would 'come unto him.' To preserve that, to hold and keep it, to lose no portion of it, was the will of the Sender, the duty and aim of Jesus. 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing.' By altering 'all which' to 'all that which,' the Revisers have brought out the fact that the word 'all,' *pan*, is neuter. Here again the allusion is to things, not persons. Everything which had been granted to Jesus was beyond recall, and every experience which God sent him would be permanently profitable ; for a day would come for the resumption of every gift, the fruition of every labour and every trial : 'but should raise it up at the last day.' And what Jesus was to accomplish on his own behalf he was commissioned to perform for all those who came within the sphere of his influence. 'For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life ; and I will (or, that I should) raise him up at the last day.' The neuter *pan*, 'all that,' is here replaced by the masculine *pas*, 'every one.' The Revisers have altered 'seeth' to 'beholdeth,' which better conveys the sense of the verb in the original, *theōreō* : 'to look at, view, behold, observe ; to contemplate, consider.' The persons to whom this promise of Jesus applies, are those who earnestly ponder his doctrine and confide in him. The mention of 'the last day' involves the idea of gradual decay, culminating in a period of dissolution, when existence can be maintained no longer. Then would be the time for the action and influence of Jesus, to infuse new vitality, and prolong the life threatened with extinction. The expression 'the last day' was not a Scriptural one, for we do not find the word 'last' connected with the word 'day' in the Old Testament. There is one passage, however, which is equivalent, according to the Authorised Version : 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ;' but it will be observed that the word 'day' is in italics, being an insertion of the translators, and the Revisers omit it, rendering 'stand up at the last.' We must turn to the word in the plural, 'days.' Again we find in the Old Testament only one passage in which the word 'last' immediately precedes, and that appears only in the Authorised Version : 'that which shall befall you in the last days,' which in the Revised Version stands 'in the latter days.' The nearest approach therefore to the expression 'last day' is 'latter days.' 'What this people shall do to my people in the latter days.' 'In the latter days thou shalt return to the Lord thy God.' 'Evil will befall you in the latter days.' 'In the latter days ye shall

6 John 29

,, 40

19 Job 25

49 Gen. 1

24 Num. 14

4 Dent. 30

31 Dent. 29

23 Jer. 20



20 Jer. 24  
48 Jer. 47  
38 Eze. 16  
2 Dan. 28  
10 Dan. 14  
3 Hos. 5

understand it perfectly.' 'In the latter days ye shall understand it.' 'Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days.' 'It shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring thee against my land.' 'He hath made known to the King Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.' 'Understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days.' 'And shall come with fear unto the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.' It is obvious from these passages that no warrant can be found for taking the expressions, 'the latter days,' 'the last day' in any but the natural and ordinary meaning of the words. Jesus had told these Jews: 'Ye have seen me, and yet believe not.' He now declares that the effect of beholding and believing in him would be the 'eternal' (age-during—Young) prolongation of life; and, further, that at the very end and crisis of life, 'the last day,' Jesus would 'raise up,' recruit, restore, reinvigorate, call it what we will, the existence which but for him would terminate. This astounding claim on the part of Jesus is in harmony with, probably was the foundation of, the evangelist's assertion at the opening of this gospel: 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men.'

1 John 4

At this high doctrine of Jesus, there arose among the hearers a murmur of dissatisfaction and incredulity. They fixed especially upon his statement that he had come down out of heaven. 'The

6 John 41

Jews therefore murmured concerning him, because he said, I am the bread which came down out of heaven.' They knew absolutely nothing of his miraculous conception and birth, but were under the impression, justified by common report and his recognised family relationships, that Joseph was his father as Mary was his mother. 'And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?' Believing him to have been born into the world in the same manner as all the rest of mankind, they could not comprehend on what ground or by what right he now claimed a heavenly descent. 'How doth he now say, I am come down out of heaven?' Jesus in reply urged them to cease from such murmurings. 'Jesus answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.'

„ 42

„ 42

„ 43

We can easily understand how impossible it would have been to give them any satisfactory explanation as to the point under discussion. Assume Jesus to have known all that related to his birth, as told us by Luke. How could he have communicated such information? How prove to them that the narrative as to what happened thirty years before was true? How could he expose his mother, in her advancing years, to the enquiries and calumnies which a disclosure of the facts would naturally provoke? Doubtless, as far as possible, the sacred secret had been confined to herself and her husband. The record of all these things was kept by her, pondered in her heart,—never made the subject of talk with others. The position of Jesus towards his mother, his brothers and sisters, and the rest of mankind, was without a parallel in human history. Giving full credence to all that has been revealed to us by the evangelists, we can detect no incongruity between one circumstance and another. It was most natural that, owing to change of place and lapse of time, and that reticence which, on such a subject, was both seemly and judicious, the mysterious birth of Jesus should have failed to reach the ears of the general public. Except by old Anna, the prophetess, and the shepherds who told of their vision of angels, we read of no attempt



made to disseminate information ; nor is there reason to suppose that Anna had more than her own prophetic forecast, or that the shepherds had aught beyond the angelic carol ; and very soon both mother and child were lost sight of, sojourning, we know not how long, in the land of Egypt, and eventually returning, not to their former abode but to Nazareth. The contemporaries of Jesus had not the knowledge possessed by us with respect to his birth and all its attendant circumstances. When challenged for an explanation, Jesus was precluded from giving one. He could only urge them not to make it a matter for discussion, and he admitted that a divine influence was needed to attract men to himself, that they might be raised up by him at the last. ‘No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him : and I will raise him up in the last day.’ 6 John 44 This divine illumination of mankind was no new doctrine. ‘It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.’ We 45 find one passage which closely corresponds in words : ‘And all thy children shall be taught (or, disciples) of the Lord ;’ and there are 54 Isa. 13 other passages to the same effect. All recipients of such divine 31 Jer. 33, 34 teaching would find their way to Jesus. ‘Every one that hath heard 4 Mic. 2 from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.’ In verse 37 6 John 45 Jesus speaks of certain ‘given’ to him by the Father ; in verse 44 of certain ‘drawn’ to him by the Father ; in verse 45 of certain who have ‘heard’ and ‘learned’ from the Father. The manner of this giving, drawing, speaking, teaching, is not stated, and we may not venture to assume that it is supernatural. God gives us life, breath, food, rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, but all in the way of nature. If he gives us to Jesus, it may, nay must, be willingly, as a bride is given to her husband ; if we are drawn, it is by the lifting of our feet ; if we hear, it is with our ears ; if we learn, it is by the aid of our own understanding. The word repeatedly used by Jesus is that of ‘coming’ to him, which involves our own volition and forbids the idea of any compulsion, or ‘irresistible grace.’ Jesus himself was careful to restrict the inference to be drawn from his words : ‘Not that any man hath seen the Father.’ We hear the Father’s 46 voice and receive his teachings, at a distance, in ways of his appointment, but him we see not, nor can any enter into his presence. But in saying ‘not any man’ Jesus made one exception : ‘save he which 46 is from God, he hath seen the Father.’ This is consistent with the statements of Jesus that the Father had sent him, and that he had come down out of heaven. But how lofty, how unprecedented the assertion ! There is no explaining it away, no possibility of attenuating its meaning. Jesus claims to have had a prior existence in heaven, to have descended thence on a commission to this world from the Father, and to have seen the Father whom no man else had seen. There is nothing vague or obscure in the statement, which must be admitted to involve the personality of the divine Father, and his active, loving concern in the destiny of the human family. Jesus does not give us doctrines evolved from his inner consciousness, but bases what he says on actual knowledge, upon experiences of a higher state of being, upon realities with which he had been conversant in a heavenly world in presence of the visible Father. His assertions must be either rejected as false, delusive, visionary, baseless, or accepted as solid, sober truth. There is nothing in them to repel

the most scientific mind ; nothing which the physicist, accustomed to deal with material existences and phenomena, could pronounce impossible or incredible. That the visible universe should have a visible Ruler ; that there should be a heavenly Father of mankind ; that he should see fit to send into this lower world a special, chosen messenger : what is there absurd or unphilosophical in such conceptions ? Up to the farthest limits of astronomical research, visible, real, material worlds are revealed to us, and there is nothing in these declarations of Jesus which is out of harmony with natural laws and the results of scientific investigation. Let none presume to discard the literal meaning of the expression 'seen the Father,' as too gross and materialistic, because contrary to such ideas as he may have formed or accepted respecting God and the unseen world.

Again, in the most emphatic and solemn manner, Jesus repeated his former statements. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.' The Revisers, on the authority of the two oldest MSS., have omitted the words 'on me' after 'believeth.' Taking the passage as it now stands, Jesus attaches life to faith : not to one act or expression of faith, but to its continued exercise. Young's rendering is : 'He who is believing . . . hath life age-  
 6 John 47 during.' The same idea is conveyed by the words which follow : 'I am the bread of life : ' life is preserved by the regular, constant eating of food. Yet there comes a period when food ceases to maintain life. 'Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died.' This bread out of heaven has the virtue of prolonging life indefinitely. 'This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.' Jesus declares himself as 'the living bread.' 'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.' Young renders the words 'for ever,' 'to the age.' The contrast is great between ordinary bread and 'living bread : ' the former has life-giving virtue only when eaten by the living ; the latter, being itself alive, imparts its own vitality, and retards the decay and death which would otherwise overtake the eater. Jesus deemed no simile too strong if only it conveyed the deep truth of an existence dependent upon himself. He adds : 'yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.' This figure of speech denotes the consecration of himself and his life to the service of mankind. But his hearers could not conceive, or at least could not agree as to his meaning, and they disputed as to the possibility or as to the manner of giving a rational interpretation to his words. 'The Jews therefore strove one with another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat ? ' Jesus did not attempt to tone down or rationalize his simile. He would have them realize intensely the solemn truth, that their life was bound up with and dependent upon his life, and that he, in the entirety of his nature, must constitute the principle of vitality within them.  
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 'Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves.' By the term 'Son of man' they would probably understand 'Messiah,' and the declaration of Jesus amounted to this : that instead of looking to him as Messiah for miraculous supplies of material food, they should make him their spiritual

nourishment, and his life their life. By that means only could they attain to the age-during life, being raised up by him at the final crisis of their existence. 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Young renders this: 'He who is eating my flesh, and drinking my blood, hath life age-during, and I will raise him up in the last day.' Jesus cannot be speaking of our present state of existence, for there is no age-during life on earth; our 'earthly tabernacle' must be dissolved by death, as his was; but he promises to those who make themselves participators in his nature, living by, upon, through him, that they shall have a vastly prolonged existence hereafter, and that when even that reaches its appointed term, the life-renewing virtue of Jesus will operate within them and raise them up. He says no more here, and though elsewhere he touches upon the mystery, and uses the expression, 'neither can they die any more,' the importance of the subject forbids our attempting to anticipate the consideration of other passages. Suffice it that in this place Jesus promises an age-during, not an immortal existence, and a resurrection at its close. How the passages are to be reconciled will be a question for future consideration. The word 'eternal,' *aiōnios*, is always rendered by Young 'age-during'; it is true that every one who hears in mind the derivation of the words 'eternal,' 'everlasting,'\* will not fail to attach to them the sense of 'age-during,' but how few are they who do this, and how great is the service rendered to the student of Scripture by the careful literal rendering of Dr. Young!

Jesus dwelt upon and intensified his simile of eating and drinking him. He added: 'For my flesh is meat indeed (Gr. true meat), and my blood is drink indeed (Gr. true drink).' Young renders: 'For my flesh truly is food,' which corresponds with Luther's: 'Denn mein Fleisch ist die rechte Speise,' and obviates the modern meaning attaching to 'meat' as 'flesh' rather than mere 'food.' Once again Jesus insists upon his metaphor, adding: 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.' The words point to a community and interchange of nature, an incorporate unity, so that what the one is the other must needs become. Jesus illustrates this oneness of existence in this way: 'As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me.' The life of Jesus was not more dependent upon his heavenly Father, than was the life of his disciples upon him. The discourse is closed by the repetition and reapplication to himself of the metaphor with which it opened. 'This is the bread which came down out of heaven: not as the fathers did eat, and died: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.' Young's rendering of the closing sentence is: 'he who is eating this bread shall live—to the age': there must be a constant, habitual feeding upon Jesus.

Commenting on verse 51, Alford says: 'Some difficult questions arise regarding the sense and reference of this saying of our Lord. (1) Does it refer to His death? and (2) is there any reference to the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper?' The first question does not arise

\* Nuttall's Dictionary shows the derivation of the word 'eternal' from the Latin '*æternus*, lasting for an *ærum*, or age.'



naturally out of this discourse of Jesus, there being not the least allusion therein to his death. Had he wished his hearers to consider it in that connection, it would have been easy and a matter of course for him to refer to the subject. The second question is based only on theoretical doctrines of the sacrament, which could never have arisen if the account of that institution had not previously been mixed up by theologians with this 6th chapter of John. That this has been and continues to be the case is undeniable, being proved by the words used by the 'priest' in the Church of England Communion Service: 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life . . . The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.' And the subsequent prayer begins: 'Almighty and everlasting God, we most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed *us, who have duly received these holy mysteries*, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.' That is the foremost aspect in which the sacrament is presented, the memorial character of the institution occupying the second place: the words 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee . . . Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee,' come after the prayer, last instead of first. The same order of arrangement is observable throughout the service: 'I purpose, through God's assistance to administer to such as shall be religiously and devoutly disposed *the most comfortable* Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; to be by them received *in remembrance* of his meritorious Cross and Passion.' The idea of comfort, of benefit, is paramount to that of remembrance. 'Ye that mind to come to the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ'; then the great benefit of a right participation is alluded to: '(for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us);' after which comes mention of remembrance: 'And to the end that we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us.' Again: 'Take this holy Sacrament to your comfort,' not even followed by the words 'in remembrance.' Again: 'Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.' It is abundantly obvious that this whole Communion Service has been moulded in conformity with the teaching of Jesus in the 6th chapter of John, as though our participation in the memorial feast of bread and wine were either the only, or the chief, or a certain means whereby we can eat 'the bread which came down out of heaven,' 'eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood.' It is satisfactory, on the other hand, to read the admission of Dean Alford, in his comment on verse 51: 'To the *ordinance itself* (the Lord's supper) there is here *no reference*; nor *could* there well have been any.' To the one first false step of applying the metaphorical teaching of Jesus in the 6th of John to the institution of the Lord's supper, may be traced back that continuous course of error, of superstition, of priestly



assumption, of intolerance, of persecution, displayed in the various phases of theological disputations and antagonisms with respect to the dogmas of Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, the Real Presence, the never-ending ecclesiastical quarrel about that ordinance which ought to be the most simple, the most touching, the most regarded, and a bond of union between all Christians.

Assume, however (it is a most unwarrantable assumption) that when Jesus uttered his discourse recorded in the 6th chapter of John, it was in connection with an intention to appoint at a later period a particular method of imparting, through the medium of bread and wine, his body and blood, and the age-during existence dependent upon participation therein ; assume further (of which there is not a tittle of proof) that when Jesus instituted the ordinance of the supper of bread and wine as representative of his broken body and shed blood, and as a remembrance of him, he designed to attach to the eating and drinking of those emblems a mysterious efficacy, whereby they would become, in a true however incomprehensible sense, his body and blood, and fulfil the purposes and promises of his former discourse : assume all this, and then, in order to justify the prevailing ideas and practice with respect to the Holy Communion, you will have to assume much more which is unprovable, imaginary, baseless. You must suppose either that any number of Christians, at any time, in any place, may assemble and communicate, without let or hindrance, one of them, perchance, having manufactured the wine, and another of them having made the bread, and another taking upon himself to pour out the former and break the latter, and that they can proceed to divide among themselves and eat and drink that 'body and blood' of Jesus without feeding upon which there can be no union with him and no age-during life ; or you must suppose that Jesus intended (although you can adduce no word of his in evidence of such an assumption) to bestow upon certain 'priests' or 'ministers' to the world's end, both in time and place, the power and privilege of consecrating the sacred elements, of administering them, at such intervals of time and under such circumstances of prayer, and praise, and place, and posture, as to them or their predecessors may have seemed advisable, the right of withholding also following necessarily from that of administering. The two suppositions are equally repugnant, equally unauthorized, but it was impossible to avoid drifting into the one or the other of these extremes from the moment it became a part of the Church's creed that the feast of remembrance was an appointed means of feeding upon Christ, and a realization of his doctrine as recorded in the 6th chapter of John.

This long discourse of Jesus was delivered in a synagogue, where, probably, the reporting if it could be more easily and accurately performed than if it had been spoken in the open air, with many coming and going. It is not to be supposed that the evangelist trusted more than could be helped to the unassisted memory of himself or others ; and the world, to remotest ages, will owe a debt of gratitude to the ready, painstaking scribe, or scribes, by whom the discourses of Jesus were preserved. 'These things said he in the (or, a) synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.' 6 John 59

The utterance of such high doctrine was trying even to the faith of his disciples. Many of them openly expressed the difficulty they felt

G John 60

in receiving it. ‘Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying ; who can hear it (or, him).’ Alford observes : ‘It has been shewn by Lampe that the word rendered “hard” signifies not so much *absurdity*, as *impiety*. It seems clear that it was not the *difficulty*, so much as the *strangeness* of the saying, which scandalized them. It is the whole discourse,—the turn given to it,—the doctrine of the Bread of Life,—the giving his Flesh and Blood to eat,—at which they take offence. “Who can hear it ?” *i.e.* “who can listen to it ?” “Who can stay and hear such sayings as this ?” not, “Who can understand it ?”’

Jesus was conscious of these murmurs of disapproval, and questioned his disciples about them. ‘But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said unto them, Doth this cause you to stumble ?’ Alford’s comment on the words ‘knowing in himself’ is, ‘by his divine knowledge.’ The evangelist did not say that, and it is somewhat presumptuous to add to his words a significance they do not properly convey. An orator may discover for himself, have an intuitive perception, that the spirit of his hearers is not in harmony with his own, especially when he sees them exchange whispered criticisms, instead of listening in rapt silence. The point of the discourse at which previously the murmurings had broken forth was his saying, ‘I am come down out of heaven.’ To this Jesus now seems to revert, meeting their objection with the words, ‘What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before ?’ They could not believe in his descent from heaven : what, then, if ocular evidence were given them of his reascension into heaven ? The source of life in all was spirit, and not flesh. ‘It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ;’ rendered by Young : ‘The spirit is that which is giving life ; the flesh profiteth nothing.’ There is a life-giving spirit, which moulds and vitalizes the incarnate form. The existence of spirit and of life apart from flesh was a thing demonstrable : the very words Jesus had been uttering were an illustration of it : ‘the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.’ The spirit, the life, the mind of the Speaker was in them, waiting reception and absorption into the souls of believing hearers. But faith was lacking even in some of his professed disciples. ‘But there are some of you that believe not.’ On this the evangelist introduces the remark : ‘for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him.’ Before expressing so positively this conviction, the author must have had evidence which amply justified it. Jesus explained that his knowledge of the unbelief existing among his disciples was the cause of his previous declaration that no one could come to him without a special divine leaning. ‘And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father.’

The result of this plain speaking on the part of Jesus was the declension of a number of his professed disciples. ‘Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.’ Young renders : ‘From this *time* many of his disciples went away backward, and were no more walking with him.’ The expression ‘went away backward’ would seem to denote instead of an actual turning of their backs upon Jesus, a gradual disaffection and retirement from his

teaching. Luther also chose a peculiar form of expression: 'many went away behind themselves,' as though edging by degrees out of the crowd until they could drop away unperceived: 'Von dem an giengen seiner Jünger viele hinter sich, und wandelten fort nicht mehr mit ihm.' Seeing this to be the case, Jesus asked his twelve apostles whether they also wished to join the backsliders. 'Jesus 6 John 67 said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away?' This is clearer than the Authorised Version, 'Will ye also go away?' and it bears the same meaning as Young's, 'Do ye also wish to go away.' Simon Peter gave an emphatic and decisive reply. Where could they find such another Teacher? None but Jesus proclaimed the doctrine of an age-during existence. 'Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words (or, hast words) of eternal life;' rendered by Young: 'Sir, to whom shall we go? thou hast the sayings of life age-during.' They had more than mere confidence in him as a Teacher: they had a conviction amounting to knowledge that he held a rank and bore a title unique among mankind: 'And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.' 69 The Authorised Version has: 'And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.' The alteration is made in accordance with the two oldest MSS. The words, 'we believe and are sure,' rendered by the Révisers, 'we have believed and know,' are translated by Tischendorf and Young, 'we have believed and known.'

Jesus answered that although he had chosen the twelve, there was one among them who, by deliberate intention and effort to injure, might be fitly described as a devil. 'Jesus answered them, Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' 70 The Greek word *diabolos*, rendered 'devil,' signifies 'slanderer.' The evangelist names the man, the betrayer, known by Jesus from the first as being such (verse 64). 'Now he spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, 70 for he it was that should betray him, *being* one of the twelve.'

The position of Jesus at this time was both difficult and dangerous. Not only was he deserted by many of his disciples, but his life was in peril from the Jews, so that he decided to confine his labours to Galilee, not venturing to enter Judæa. 'And after these things Jesus 7 John 1 walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill him.' He visited with his disciples the villages of Cæsarea Philippi, situated at the extreme north of Galilee. 'And 8 Mark 27 Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Cæsarea Philippi.' In the course of their journeyings he asked his disciples what was the popular opinion with respect to himself. 'And in the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am?' 27 Matthew gives the question more explicitly: 'Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?' The Authorised Version stands: 'Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?' 16 Mat. 13 The Révisers have followed the two oldest MSS., noting that many ancient authorities agree with the Authorised Version. Here again we find the title 'Son of man' applied by Jesus to himself, the term being probably understood at the time as equivalent to 'the Messiah.'



Luke 18 Luke states that the question was put on an occasion when Jesus had been engaged in private prayer. 'And it came to pass, as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him : and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am ?' The disciples answered that there were three opinions current : that he was John the Baptist ; that he was Elijah ; or some other of the old prophets.

8 Mark 28 'And they told him, saying, John the Baptist : and others, Elijah ; but others, One of the prophets.' Matthew is again somewhat more explicit : 'And they said, some *say*, John the Baptist ; some, Elijah ; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' The opinion expressed by Herod that the Baptist, whom he had beheaded, had come to life again, had been accepted by the people ; and that idea once started, there was no limit to its application : it might be any one restored to life.

9 Luke 19 'And they answering said, John the Baptist ; but others *say*, Elijah ; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again.' Then Jesus enquired what the apostles themselves declared him to be. The three evangelists agree as to the exact words of his question, but each introduces it with words of his own, which is what one would expect to find in independent narratives based upon the same facts.

16 Mat. 15 'He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am ?' 'And he asked them, But who say ye that I am ?' 'And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am ?' Peter, as on a former occasion, was either deputed or took upon himself to answer in the name of the twelve.

8 Mark 29 The evangelists agree in the sense of his reply, but give it in different degrees of fulness. 'Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.' 'And Peter answering saith, The Christ of God.' 'And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' If we adopt the view stated in the 'Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels,' that the common tradition is embodied in the simpler wording of Mark, it may reasonably be assumed that Luke from evidence before him was justified in adding 'of God,' and that the memory of Matthew enabled him to supply the exact expression, 'the Son of the living God.' The adoption of the term 'living God' by Peter indicates that the teaching of Jesus deepened in the minds of his disciples the conception of God as a living person. Their expression of faith in Jesus as Christ, or Messiah, accorded with his own assertions that he was the 'Son of man :' they accepted him for what he claimed to be.

17 Matthew alone supplies us with the observations made by Jesus on this confession of Peter. 'And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' Alford remarks : 'The name Simon Bar-Jonah is doubtless used as indicating his fleshly state and extraction, and forming the greater contrast to his spiritual state, name, and blessing, which follow. The same "Simon son of Jonas" is uttered when he is reminded, by the thrice repeated enquiry "Lovest thou me ?" of his frailty, in his previous denial of his Lord.' From the expression of Jesus the much simpler conclusion might be drawn, that the mention of the father's name is indicative of the interest taken by Jesus in the family history of this disciple, probably his appreciation of certain paternal characteristics, and his recognition of their inheritance by the son. But the congratulation of Jesus indicated that not by any natural



gift, nor as the result of any human teaching, had this conviction come to Peter; a special divine illumination had been granted him, a revelation from the heavenly Father of the Messiahship of Jesus: 'for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' This application of the term 'flesh and blood' may serve to throw light upon its meaning when used in the 6th chapter of John. Here it obviously signifies 'human beings' or 'humanity'; giving it the same sense there, the eating and drinking of the 'flesh and blood' of the Son of man must denote, figuratively, the feeding upon his humanity, that our nature may grow up bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.

Peter's confession of faith justified the name which Jesus had previously given him: 'Thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation Peter (*That is, Rock or Stone*); which Alford explains thus: *Kapha* in Aramaic, *Kaph* in Hebrew, a stone.' 1 John 12 Jesus now tells this apostle: 'And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter (Gr. *Petros*), and upon this rock (Gr. *petra*) I will build my church.' 16 Mat. 18 Alford explains: 'the termination being only altered from *Petra* to *Petros* to suit the masculine appellation,' and he comments as follows: 'The application of the promise to St. Peter has been elaborately impugned by Dr. Wordsworth. His zeal to appropriate the rock to Christ has somewhat overshot itself. In arguing that the term can apply to none but God, he will find it difficult surely to deny all reference to a rock in the name of Peter. To me, it is equally difficult, nay, impossible, to deny all reference, in "upon this rock," to the preceding word Peter. Let us keep to the plain straightforward sense of Scripture, however that sense may have been misused by Rome.' The word 'rock' or 'stone' served to denote the firmness of the apostle's character and faith: upon him, and such as him, the church would be built and its solidity would depend. The firm, unhesitating, divinely-given faith of Peter in the Messiahship of Jesus, was the material on which the church must rest. Jesus did not say that he would build his church upon this man, but upon the rock which he resembled, and the name of which he deserved to bear.

In this passage, as elsewhere, Dr. Young replaces the word 'church' by the word 'assembly.' The distinction is an important one, because we have been accustomed to consider and talk about the 'Church' as an Institution, rather than as the whole body of Christians. The latter is the Scriptural sense of the word 'church,' and it will be well to bear in mind that whenever men speak of the 'Church' as an Institution, when they apply to it the term 'she,' and discuss her rights, her services, her connection with or separation from the State, they are not speaking of the church in the sense in which it was spoken of by Christ and his apostles. Whenever the 'Church' is alluded to, let us apply mentally the word 'assembly; ' if the subject will bear that application, we are dealing with the Scriptural notion of a church, but not otherwise. Alford says: 'This word (church) occurs but in one place besides in the Gospels, ch. xviii. 17, and there in the same sense as here, viz., *the congregation of the faithful*.' This assembly of believers would prove invincible: 'and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.' 16 Mat. 18 Alford explains: 'The gates of hell (Hades), by a well-known

16 Mat. 19

Oriental form of speech, is equivalent to *the power of the Kingdom of death*. The form is still preserved when the Turkish empire is known as the "Ottoman Porte." Messiah's Church is not confined to this world; membership therewith is not dissolved by death; the grand 'communion of saints' will flourish not on earth alone, but in the world to come. And between the church in earth and heaven there is an identity of power and purpose. 'I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' The word 'And' at the beginning of the verse is omitted by the Revisers on the authority of the two oldest MSS. Tischendorf renders, 'shalt bind . . . will be bound, shalt loose . . . will be loosed.' Young renders: 'And I will give to thee the keys of the reign of the heavens: and whatever thou mayest bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens; and whatever thou mayest loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.' The Baptist and Jesus had proclaimed from the first, 'The reign of the heavens is at hand.' The acceptance of Jesus as 'the Christ of God' is the means of access to that heavenly kingdom, and the laws laid down for his church on earth are identical with those which prevail in heaven. Many of the teachings of Jesus, in his sermon on the mount especially, seem to us 'counsels of perfection' unattainable in this world: therein lies their true worth; no code of laws is sufficient for mankind which does not embrace the whole of our existence, and the rules of duty and of liberty laid down for Christians upon earth must harmonize with those which exist above.

16 Mat. 29

8 Mark 39

9 Luke 21

It was enough for Jesus that his apostles were convinced of his Messiahship. His claim to be the Christ was not a matter which he desired them to declare to others. On the contrary, he enjoined complete silence with respect to it. 'Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.' 'And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.' 'But he charged them, and commanded *them* to tell this to no man.' It is remarkable that among all the guesses and assertions made by the public as to the personality of Jesus, that of his being the expected Messiah was not prominent or widespread. John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets, he might be,—anybody rather than the Messiah. There was little or nothing in the career of Jesus which answered to Jewish expectations: a fact recognized by the Baptist when he sent messengers to ask Jesus, 'Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another.' The self-assertiveness of Jesus was not in the direction of popular ideas; the multitude which was ready to 'take him by force, to make him king,' turned from him in disappointment when he gave them only the promise of age-during life through him. Jesus was more intent on doing his work as Messiah than on claiming the character. If only he, or his disciples, had stood forth and proclaimed, Here is the Christ, the enthusiasm of the Jewish people might have kindled at the word: but what would that have served, when they had no higher idea of him than to take and set him up as a king? The reign of the heavens, which Jesus sought to establish upon earth, would not have been thereby advanced, but, on the contrary, his work of reformation would have been thrown back, and the nation filled with delusive hopes and aims leading to strife and bloodshed.

7 Luke 19

6 John 15

We can understand why Jesus was so earnest in charging his disciples to say nothing to anyone about his being the Christ.

But upon the basis of his disciples' knowledge of him, he raised up in their minds ideas and anticipations as to the nature and end of his career as the Christ, which were as saddening as they were unexpected and astounding. 'And he began to teach them, that the <sup>8 Mark 31</sup> Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.' Luke gives the prophecy in nearly identical words: 'Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of <sup>9 Luke 22</sup> the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.' Matthew records the mention of Jerusalem. 'From that time began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he <sup>16 Mat. 21</sup> must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.' This power of foresight in Jesus is but another trait of the marvellous in his incomprehensible attributes; but what a terrible addition to the burden of life must such a prescience have been! He deemed it best to prepare the minds of his disciples for this approaching and inevitable catastrophe. When next he turned his face toward Jerusalem, it would be with no hope of acceptance and success, but with the certainty of rejection, suffering and death. But beyond all that, he discerned and unhesitatingly foretold, that with respect to himself there would come to pass a new, strange, astounding fact in human history: after death he would be raised up! For a short time, three days only, he would be numbered with the dead, but would then be restored to life. There could be no doubt as to the meaning of the expression 'raised up,' for Mark uses the same verb as in the 6th chapter of John, *anistemi*, and Matthew and Luke use another verb bearing the same sense, *egeirō*: that resurrection from death which he had promised to others, he now prognosticates for himself. Still, there was nothing to indicate that it would be a visible resurrection, a reappearance upon earth, in the one case more than in the other.

This declaration of Jesus about himself had been made publicly, with no attempt to restrict it to a few only of his disciples. Peter, probably fearing both for his Master and his Master's cause, drew him aside, and began to expostulate with him. 'And he spake the <sup>8 Mark 32</sup> saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.' The words in which he did so have been preserved: 'And Peter <sup>16 Mat. 22</sup> took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord (or, God *have mercy on thee*): this shall never be unto thee.' Young renders: 'Spare thyself, lord; this shall not be to thee;' which agrees with Luther: 'Herr, schone deiner selbst, das widerfahre dir nur nicht.' Jesus could not brook dissuasion or counsel such as that, whispered to him privately. He turned round, and seeing his disciples within hearing, he sternly reprov'd Peter. 'But <sup>8 Mark 33</sup> he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me, Satan.' *Satan* is 'a Hebrew word meaning the adversary, enemy.' Young renders it 'adversary.' Peter was seeking to put an impediment in the path of Jesus; his counsel was alien from the Divine purposes, and influenced by human motives: 'But <sup>16 Mat. 23</sup> he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou

16 Mat. 24 art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.' Not only would Jesus undergo such sufferings, but his followers must be prepared for similar ones. 'Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' Mark introduces these words by saying, 'And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them . . .,' and Luke explains: 'And he said unto all. . . .'. Young renders: 'If any one willeth to come after me, let him disown himself.' The Authorised Version has: 'If any *man* will come after me:' the Revisers by changing 'will' into 'would' have given, as Young does, the sense of 'be willing' or 'be desirous.' The verb *aparneomai* signifies to 'deny utterly:' it occurs only here and in twelve passages relating to Peter's subsequent denial of Jesus, whereby the apostle renounced and reversed this counsel, denying his Master for the sake of himself, instead of himself for the sake of his Master. We must be careful, however, neither to enlarge nor restrict the application of this direction of Jesus. He did not say, If any man would lead a virtuous life, would believe in me, would obey God's will and my precepts, or even would profess himself my disciple, but if any man would come after me.' That must mean to give up himself to the service of mankind, to spend his life in proclaiming divine truths and opposing human errors, to undertake the work of a Teacher and Reformer: such followers of Jesus must become martyrs in his cause. Moreover that was an age of reformation and of martyrdom: let us not rush to the conclusion that all ages must be alike, and that Jesus intended his words to apply to all times. That their truth was realised so long in the very bosom of the church, has been the church's shame and scandal. The man who was willing to take up and carry on the work of Jesus would have to renounce all thought and care of self, 'deny utterly himself,' lose the consciousness of his own personality in the desire to be one with Christ. The meaning of the added words, 'and take up his cross' may not at the time have been so clear. Was it a form of expression current at the time, or did it bring before the minds of the hearers the idea of a troop of condemned malefactors doomed to crucifixion by Roman law? That seems probable, for although Luke adds the word 'daily,' 'take up his cross daily,' Jesus connects his saying with the loss of life: 'For whosoever would save his life (or, soul) shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life (or, soul) for my sake shall find it.' Young renders: 'For whoever may will to save his life, shall lose it; and whoever may lose his life for my sake, shall find it.' The 'Englishman's Greek New Testament' also gives the literal sense: 'For whoever may desire . . . but whoever may lose.' Mark introduces the words 'and the gospel's.' 'For whosoever would save his life (or, soul) shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life (or, soul) for my sake and the gospel's shall save it,' which is rendered by Young: 'For whoever may wish to save his life shall lose it; but whoever may lose his life for my sake and for the good news, he shall save it.' The meaning seems to be this: Let the man who desires to follow me as a preacher of the gospel, cast aside all care for himself, and face a death of shame. For the desire of saving the life arises out of the inevitableness of losing the life; and the loss of the life for the sake of me and my cause will be followed by the

8 Mark 24  
 9 Luke 23  
 16 Mat. 25  
 8 Mark 25



saving, finding, recovery of the life. Were it otherwise, what hope of recompense could Jesus hold out to his followers? What would it advantage them to gain the whole world as converts, and then themselves be blotted out of existence? 'For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, and forfeit his life (or, soul)?' 16 Mat. 26  
 Luke gives the words thus: 'For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?' rendered by Young: 9 Luke 25  
 'For what is a man profited having gained the whole world, but having lost or having forfeited himself?'

'Would' he 'have heart to endure, for the life of the worm and the fly?'

Is not life incomparably the most precious of all possessions? 'Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life (or, soul)?' 16 Mat. 26  
 If death on earth closed all, how could any righteous servant of God see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied? When 53 Isa. 11  
 Jesus laid down his life for us, it was in the full knowledge and assurance that he would take it again. The sacrifice of Jesus went no further than that: 'Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again.' We are told that 10 John 17  
 Jesus 'for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame.' He would have his followers animated by his own ambition, 12 Heb. 2  
 sustained by his own hope. The life we lead on earth must be viewed in connection with the life to be continued elsewhere. The Messiah, despised on earth, would shortly be revealed, irradiated with divine honour and attended by ministering hosts. 'For the Son of Man 16 Mat. 27  
 shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels.' Tischendorf and Young render literally: 'For the Son of Man is about to come.' And then he will be the established judge of human conduct, and will mete out to every man a destiny according to his past career: 'and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds (Gr. doing).' , 27  
 This world, when Jesus lived on it, was full of moral evil: his person and his teaching were sufficiently disesteemed to make loyalty to him unfashionable and contemptible; but aversion to his cause on earth must necessarily lead to estrangement between us and him hereafter; he will show no respect for those who have shrunk from his service and his teaching. 'For whosoever shall be ashamed 8 Mark 38  
 of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with his holy angels.' Nor would this triumph of his cause be postponed to a remote period, but within the lifetime of some then present his approaching dominion would become perceptible. 'Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand 16 Mat. 28  
 here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.' Luke gives the words: 'But I tell 9 Luke 27  
 you of a truth, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.' There is again a slight variation in Mark: 'And he said unto them, Verily I 9 Mark 1  
 say unto you, There be some of them that stand *by*, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power;' rendered by Young, 'till they may see the reign of God having come in power.' The reign of the Messiah is identical with the 'reign of God.' The strangest of all strange theories hazarded by way of interpreting this declaration of Jesus, is that adopted by

Alford, who refers it to ‘*the destruction of Jerusalem*, and the full manifestation of the kingdom of Christ by the annihilation of the Jewish polity; which event, in this aspect as well as in all its terrible attendant details, was a *type* and *earnest* of the final coming of Christ.’ What an idea to form of the nature and realization of the reign of God and Jesus!

Within a week from the delivery of this discourse there occurred a mysterious and supernatural event, which is recorded by three of the evangelists. Jesus selected three of his disciples, and, accompanied by them only, ascended a lofty mountain. ‘And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart.’ Mark introduces the circumstance in the same words: ‘And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves.’ Luke differs somewhat: ‘And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.’ Alford accounts for the difference between the mention of six days and eight days by assuming the one reckoning to be *exclusive* and the other *inclusive*. The word ‘about’ would seem to indicate some uncertainty in the mind of Luke as to the exact time; and such discrepancies make it evident either that he had not the records of the other evangelists before him, or that he did not rely entirely upon them. He ascertained the fact, omitted by them, that the retirement of Jesus was for the purpose of prayer, and that whilst he was engaged in prayer this manifestation took place: ‘And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling.’ Matthew describes the transformation in the strongest conceivable terms: ‘And he was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.’ Mark dwells on the inimitable, unearthly lustre of his raiment: ‘And he was transfigured before them: and his garments became glistering, exceeding white: so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.’ The expression ‘as snow,’ which appears in the Authorised Version, is discarded by the Revisers, it being omitted in the two oldest MSS. Simultaneously with this astounding change in the form and dress of Jesus, it became apparent to the three apostles that two other men were there, discoursing with Jesus; and, further, that they were neither contemporaries with themselves nor unknown angelic beings in human form, but the two great prophe’s of their nation, whose earthly life had terminated many centuries before. ‘And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.’ Matthew is to the same effect. ‘And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him.’ Luke: ‘And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah.’ This identification must have been derived from the conversation going on and the occasional introduction of the names of the speakers. Luke adds to the narrative the two facts, that these mysterious visitants were themselves resplendent in person, and that the disciples were able to overhear the colloquy and to catch its purport: ‘who appeared in glory and spake of his decease (or, departure) which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.’ Luke

gives also the further explanation, that the disciples had been overcome with drowsiness, and that upon their becoming fully awake they perceived the irradiation proceeding from the person of Jesus, and the two men standing by him. 'Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake (or, having remained awake), they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.' With open eyes and eager ears the disciples could but gaze and listen in rapt astonishment. When it became evident that the visitors were taking leave of Jesus, Peter could contain himself no longer, but exclaimed that it was good for them to remain on that spot, and that with the permission of Jesus they would set to work to erect three temporary dwellings for him, Moses and Elijah. 'And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles (or, booths); one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' Mark is to the same effect. 'And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles (or, booths); one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' Matthew represents Peter as offering to do the whole work himself, according to the Revised Version following the two oldest MSS.: 'And Peter answered and said unto Jesus, Lord (Sir—Young), it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles (or, booths); one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' Luke explains that Peter himself knew not what he was saying: 'not knowing what he said;' and Mark states that he felt unable to say the fitting thing, and that all the disciples were in a state of terror. 'For he wist not what to answer; for they became sore afraid.' Their sense of awe and wonder was yet further deepened, for whilst Peter was uttering the words, the disciples perceived themselves first overshadowed and then enfolded in a cloud. 'And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.' Matthew notes the intransiency of the cloud. 'While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them.' Then came a still more startling phenomenon: a voice out of the cloud from an unseen Speaker, addressing them in words of high and solemn import. Mark's account is as follows: 'And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.' In Luke, according to the Authorised Version, the words are the same; but the Revisers, following the two oldest MSS., render: 'And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him.' Matthew is fuller: 'And behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' These slight variations, which involve no contradiction, are not to be wondered at. There were three witnesses, and neither of the written narratives comes direct from them. The account of any event, derived from independent witnesses, will be found to differ in points of detail, without impugning in any way the original testimony, or the good faith of those by whom the facts have been collected and preserved. It is noticeable that the account of Matthew, who only of the three evangelists was in close and constant intercourse with Peter, John and James, is here fuller. He alone tells us that the disciples fell prostrate, being overcome with fear, and

9 Luke 32

.. 33

9 Mark 5

17 Mat. 4

9 Luke 33

9 Mark 6

9 Luke 34

17 Mat. 5

9 Mark 7

Luke 35

17 Mat. 5

that Jesus roused them by his touch and reassured them by his voice. 17 Mat. 6, 7 'And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid.' When they looked up, the vision had departed: Moses and Elijah had disappeared, and Jesus only, in his familiar presence, was with them. 'And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only.' Each of the other evangelists relates the fact in his own way. 9 Mark 8 'And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves.' 9 Luke 36 'And when the voice came (or, was past), Jesus was found alone.'

In pondering this astounding revelation of the supernatural, let us be careful not to assume, either that it was granted to the disciples as a mere spectacle, or that the phenomena attending it involved any infraction of the settled order of the universe. However startling, exceptional, unprecedented the event, all the circumstances and incidents described must have been necessarily connected therewith. The expedition to the mountain-top was evidently planned by Jesus for a special purpose. If he had, as we are assured he had, more than human knowledge, it must have been communicated to him in some extraordinary way. He foresaw and foretold the approaching and premature end of his earthly career, and with an overburdened soul, longing, probably, for consolation and further guidance, he sought a place where he could pray in solitude. Deeply he felt, and well he knew, that such a way of access to his heavenly Father lay open to him. This is confirmed by the apostolic statement respecting Jesus: 5 Heb. 7 'Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear.' Up to this point, all was within the range of ordinary experience: the disciples saw simply the praying man and his belief in a listening God. But the sudden apparition, in visible human form, of two glorious strangers, who conversed with Jesus, and whom he addressed by the names of Moses and Elijah,—this was an experience new to mankind. Visions and ministries of angels are recorded in the Scriptures, and Daniel was visited by 'a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz; his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and feet like in colour to burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude;' but the sight was too terrible for Daniel, who says: 'So I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me;' and again: 'And behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips;' and again: 'Then there touched me again one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me.' The human form was there, but nothing to indicate kinship with men, or to suggest a previous earthly existence, far less the possibility of recognition. But here are two men, known to fame, whose names were foremost in the sacred records of Jewish history; after the lapse of many centuries, their feet stand again upon this world in which once they played so conspicuous a part; they are seen in company with One who is a far greater Teacher than they had been; and they are heard giving or taking counsel with him respecting the manner and circumstances of his approaching 'exodus,' which had been



interpreted as 'decease.' Alford explains : 'This decease is expressed in the original by the word "exodus," *going forth*,' which could be no other than his *death*.' Such a revelation is stupendous and unique ; but admitting the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, that is, of the continuance of life after the dissolution of the bodily frame in which during the earthly pilgrimage it has been centred, there is nothing incredible, nothing contrary to rational inference, in assuming the possibility of the return of those departed. Jesus was no ordinary man ; he lived as it were upon the border-land between earth and heaven ; apostolic declarations agree with his own, to the effect that his goings forth were of old, from everlasting ; Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, was sent to announce his coming ; angels carolled his birth, and once ministered to his wants in the wilderness ; now the grand old leader of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, and the prophet who had been borne from earth to the heavens in a chariot of fire, are commissioned to confer with him. There is nothing in all this at which human reason should take offence or stumble, nothing at which the highest and most scientific intellect should scoff or feel incredulous. That human life should exist elsewhere, is no more strange than that it should exist on earth ; that departed saints should continue to take an interest in this world's history is the natural corollary from their previous earthly career ; that it should be the will of God to allow intercourse between his beloved Son on earth and those who had been his pioneers in past ages, is a noble, elevating thought : and all this is true, actual, certified fact, matter of history, vouched by well authenticated records, set forth in plain, simple, straightforward, unexaggerated language, by three independent compilers, based on the testimony of three chosen witnesses, one of whom has confirmed it in these words : 'For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming (Gr. presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : and this voice we *ourselves* heard come (Gr. brought) out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.'

1 ii. Pet.  
16-18

To assume that the transfiguration of Jesus was a mere spectacular display, designed to invest him with a glamour of royalty, and to produce awe in the minds of the disciples, would be as absurd as to suppose that the glow and grandeur of a sunset are produced for the sake of the beholders. In the one case as in the other, the phenomena must be attributable to the action of natural laws, however little we may be able to trace or comprehend their operation. 'His face did shine as the sun : ' of Moses, in the days of his flesh, a similar irradiation of countenance is recorded : 'When he came down from the mount . . . Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone (or, sent forth beams. Heb. horns) by reason of his speaking with him. And when Aaron and the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone ; and they were afraid to come nigh him.' That apart even from any extrinsic cause, the soul of man, in certain states of exaltation, will suffice to transform and glorify his countenance, would seem to be indicated by what is recorded of the martyr Stephen : 'And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on

34 Ex. 29, 30

6 Acts 15

him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.' The appearance and descent of the cloud which overshadowed the disciples, and into which they entered, resembles former manifestations of that kind. 'And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days : and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.' 'And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud : for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Then spake Solomon, The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.' The evangelists make no reference to these analogous occurrences. Peter, James and John related simply what they saw and heard, without a hint or thought of how it might fit in with previous manifestations recorded in the law and the prophets. A careful, sober, reverential, critical investigation and comparison of such Scriptural disclosures, from Genesis to Revelation, has yet to be made. It would form a study replete with interest, and would reveal the fact that what we term 'the unseen world,' of which we have received only these momentary glimpses and sudden flashes of information, is subject to laws of matter and motion, and the subtle compounding of things physical and spiritual, which constitute a basis of life, perception, energy, bodily and mental activities and interests, akin to those which prevail in this world of ours.

And what inference must necessarily be drawn from the fact of the 'voice out of the cloud?' 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee.' 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.' 'Lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' There is no possibility of explaining away such testimonies as these; no middle course can be chosen in dealing with them. They must either be accepted as strict, literal, historic facts, or rejected as the basest and most shameless deceptions ever palmed off upon human credulity. Accepting them, they lead necessarily and inevitably to the conclusion, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a living, loving personality, not a power or principle merely, nor his oversight and guidance a stream or tendency only, setting towards truth and goodness and against falsehood and wrong. The God of Israel was worshipped as a Being endowed with all the best and noblest attributes of humanity: just, jealous, merciful, long-suffering, changing his plans and purposes according to the changes in character of those with whom he dealt. In proof of the fact that Jesus' conceptions were of the same kind, it is enough to quote one or two of his sayings. 'I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.' 'O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me: and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.' Doubtless there is a deep truth in the definition of divine providence as 'the power that makes for righteousness,'

but unless behind the power we discern a person, we cannot worship or believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first Article of the Church of England contains a statement, as strange as it is positive and unauthorised, respecting the nature of God : 'There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions.' Can any human mind conceive, can any human heart go out in love towards a Being 'without body, parts or passions ?' It is one thing to speak of God as invisible, 'whom no man hath seen, nor can see,' and quite another thing to declare that he is without form or substance, without parts or members, without passions, either of grief or joy. The testimony of Scripture is the very reverse of all that. 'And he said, Thou canst not see my face : 33 Ex. 20 23 for man shall not see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock : and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by : and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back : but my face shall not be seen.' 'It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.' 6 I. Tim. 16  
6 Gen. 6

These two quotations are chosen out of a multitude. Students of the Scriptures cannot but feel startled by the strong anthropomorphic expressions and ideas constantly applied to God. Even assuming them all to be figures of speech, it must be acknowledged that the metaphors denote realities analogous thereto. If it be wished to deny this, and to set aside the Scriptural declarations, it would be difficult to find a more emphatic form of contradiction than that contained in the assertion that God is 'without body, parts, or passions.'

The marvellous vision granted to the disciples on the mountain, however much it tended to confirm their faith, was not designed to be immediately reported publicly. Jesus expressly desired them to make no mention of it until the Messiah should have risen from the dead. 'And as they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead.' 9 Mark 9

Matthew gives the prohibition in nearly identical words : 'And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead.' 17 Mat. 9

Luke does not record the prohibition, but mentions the fact of their silence. 'And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.' 9 Luke 36

They were in doubt as to the meaning of the allusion of Jesus to the rising from the dead. 'And they kept the saying (thing—Young), questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean.' 9 Mark 10

Jesus had previously told them that he would 'be killed, and the third day be raised up.' But such an event lay too far outside the range of human experience to be realized by anticipation. On more than one occasion the disciples mistook his words : when he spoke of heaven, they understood by it bread, instead of doctrine ; and when he said that Lazarus slept, they again took the saying literally, instead of figuratively. Now he used an expression which was altogether new and unfamiliar, and they could not venture to accept it literally ; the expectation of seeing 16 Mat. 21

him again alive on earth after death was too much for their minds to grasp. The sense in which they should take his words was a subject of discussion among them.

On another matter they sought information from Jesus. The revelation to them of Elijah with Moses brought to their minds the current expectation that the former would reappear on earth. Alford says: 'It was (and is to this day) the belief of the Jews that Elias in person should come before the end.' This was doubtless based upon the prophecy: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to (or, with) the children, and the heart of the children to (or, with) their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth (or, land) with a curse (or, ban).'

4 Mal. 5, 6

17 Mat. 10

9 Mark 11

17 Mat. 11, 12

„ 12

„ 12

1 Luke 17

17 Mat. 13

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?' Alford's explanation of the question is as follows: 'The occasion of this enquiry was, that they had just seen Elias withdrawn from their eyes, and were enjoined not to tell the vision. How *then* should this be? If this was not the coming of Elias, *was he yet to come?* If it was, how was it so *secret* and so short?' Mark gives simply the drift of the question. 'And they asked him, saying, The scribes say (or, How is it that the scribes say?) that Elijah must first come.' This is rendered by Young: 'And they were questioning him, saying, that the scribes say that Elijah it behoves first to come.' Jesus in reply confirmed the popular impression. 'And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things.' Alford observes: 'Our Lord speaks here plainly *in the future*.' But there was a sense in which it was true that Elijah had already come, had been unrecognised, and had simply been made the sport of human passions. 'But I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed.' And similar treatment awaited the Messiah himself. 'Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them.' The meaning of Jesus was plain to the disciples: they understood him to allude to John the Baptist, whose career had been predicted before his birth by the angel Gabriel: 'He shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient *to walk* in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared *for him*.' 'Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.'

Mark's account of these remarks of Jesus differs somewhat from that of Matthew: a fact which is not to be wondered at, when it is remembered that the conversation could not have been noted down at the time, for they 'were coming down from the mountain,' but must have been recalled by an effort of the memory, we know not how long after. Mark relates as follows: 'And he said unto them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things: and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought? But I say unto you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they listed, even as it is written of him.' There are here two statements: (1) that 'it is written' that the Son of man should undergo many sufferings; (2) that Elijah,



meaning John the Baptist, had likewise suffered at the hands of men 'as it is written of him.' Now we can find no Scriptural prediction of sufferings relating to the Baptist. It seems clear, therefore, that the words must be taken in some other sense. We must distinguish between the simple expression 'it is written,' and the same expression accompanied by a Scriptural quotation. Of the former class are the following: 'Write ye this man childless.' 'To execute upon them 22 Jer. 30 the judgment written.' In these passages the sense of the word 149 Ps. 9 'written' is equivalent to 'decreed,' there being no reference to any prophecy. The remark applies equally to the same form of expression used by Jesus respecting the sufferings 'written' of him and of the Baptist.

It is open to question whether, in dealing with this reference to Elijah, the original signification of the word 'Elijah' should not be borne in mind. That name is composed of two words, Eli—my God, and Jah—Jehovah. Names were given to denote special characters and offices, and when bestowed prophetically they must be regarded in that light. When Jesus told his disciples that the expected 'My God is Jehovah' should come; that, if they would receive it, John the Baptist was 'My God is Jehovah,' and that in his person 'My God is Jehovah' had come already: in each case, the derivation of the word being known, the name Elijah would naturally be understood in that sense. When the priests and Levites asked the Baptist, 'Art thou Elijah,' and he answered 'No,' it could not have been that 1 John 21 they were ignorant of the fact that his name was 'John' and not 'Elijah,' nor that they supposed it possible he was that old prophet renewing his earthly life and career, but that they wished to know whether he claimed as his the office pertaining to the title 'My God is Jehovah;' and his prompt denial of every title save one, indicated that one name and one work alone were his: he came with a new message; he was the voice heralding in the desert One mightier and worthier who would come after him. The prediction of the angel (Gabriel alludes to the meaning attached to the word Elijah: 'Many 1 Luke 16, 17 of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God;' therefore the title 'My God is Jehovah' applied to him: 'and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of "My God is Jehovah."')

The prophetic writings contain remarkable predictions with respect to David. 'They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their 30 Jer. 9 king, whom I will raise up unto them.' 'Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king.' 'And I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant 34 Eze. 23 David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I 24 the Lord will be their God, and my servant David prince among them.' 'And my servant David shall be king over them; and they 37 Eze. 24 all shall have one shepherd, and David my servant shall be their 25 prince for ever.' To understand these passages, it is only necessary to bear in mind the fact that the word 'David' signifies 'Beloved,' the very term by which Jesus was designated by the voice from heaven. Surely the prophecy of the coming of 'My God is Jehovah' as a teacher, should be interpreted in the same way as these passages relating to the coming of the 'Beloved' as a shepherd and king. There is no more ground for the opinion that Elijah himself will

actually come as a prophet, than there is that David himself will actually come as a shepherd and king.

Respecting the account of the transfiguration of Jesus, Alford observes: 'The concurrence between the three evangelists is exact in all the circumstances, and the fourth alludes, not obscurely, to the event, which it was not part of his purpose to relate. 'And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth.'

1 John 14

9 Mark 14

9 Luke 37

Mark continues his narrative as follows. 'And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great multitude about them, and scribes questioning with them.' Luke states that this was on the following day: 'And it came to pass, on the next day, when they were come down from the mountain, a great multitude met him.' Alford remarks: 'The time of the transfiguration was probably *night*, for the following reasons. (1) St. Luke informs us that the Lord had gone up to the mount *to pray*; which he usually did at night (Luke vii. 12; xxi. 37; xxii. 39; Matt. xiv. 23, 24 al.). (2) All the circumstances connected with the glorification and accompanying appearances would thus be more prominently seen. (3) The Apostles were *asleep*, and are described, Luke ver. 32, as "having kept awake through it." (4) *They did not descend till the next day* (Luke ver. 37), which would be almost inexplicable had the event happened by day, but a matter of course if by night.'

The sudden appearance of Jesus upon the scene was a surprise to the people. This indicates that his departure with the three disciples had been unobserved, which might well be the case if it was at night. 'And straightway all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.' Alford notes: 'The Lord's countenance probably retained traces of the glory on the mount; so strong words as *were greatly amazed* would hardly have been used merely of their surprise at his sudden approach: see Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30.' There is, however, no hint in the narrative that the wonder and salutation arose out of anything more than his unexpected arrival at an opportune moment and from an unlooked for quarter. Jesus enquired what was the subject of discussion between his disciples and the scribes. 'And he asked them, What question ye with them?' Thereupon one of the crowd explained the matter, in which he had the strongest personal interest. 'And one of the multitude answered him . . .' Luke notes the eager, earnest way in which he spoke. 'And behold, a man from the multitude cried, saying . . .' Matthew's account, obviously that of a beholder, describes the man's humble, reverential attitude: 'And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and saying . . .' Matthew proceeds, according to the Authorised Version, as follows: 'Lord, have mercy on my son; for he is lunatick, and sore vexed.' The Tauchnitz edition indicates that the last three words are, 'and is sick,' in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. The Revisers have not adopted that reading, but they have introduced the word 'epileptic.' 'Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is epileptic, and suffereth grievously.' Tischendorf retains the word 'lunatick,' which is certainly the meaning of the verb *selēniazomai*,

9 Mark 15

,, 16

,, 17

9 Luke 38

17 Mat. 14

,, 15

derived from *selēnē*, the moon. Young's rendering is : 'Sir, deal kindly with my son, for he is lunatic, and suffers miserably.' Luther renders the word 'mondsüchtig,' moonstruck. According to Mark, the father attributed the illness to a spirit : 'Master (or, Teacher), I <sup>9 Mark 17</sup> brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit.' Luke's account runs : 'Master (or, Teacher), I beseech thee to look upon <sup>9 Luke 38, 39</sup> my son ; for he is mine only child : and behold, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out . . .' It is obvious, therefore, that the father was persuaded that the malady, whether epilepsy or lunacy, had a spiritual origin. Whatever the cause, the symptoms were most distressing. 'For oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft-times <sup>17 Mat. 15</sup> into the water.' 'And wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him <sup>9 Mark 18</sup> down (or, rendeth him) : and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away.' 'And it teareth (or, convulseth) him that he foameth, <sup>9 Luke 39</sup> and it hardly departeth from him, bruising him sorely.' Moreover, the father had been grievously disappointed. He had brought his child to Jesus ('I brought unto thee my son'), but as Jesus was not to be found, application had been made to his disciples, who, it would seem, had attempted, but failed, to exorcise the evil spirit. The three evangelists agree in that. 'And I brought him to thy <sup>17 Mat. 16</sup> disciples, and they could not cure him.' 'And I spake to <sup>9 Mark 18</sup> thy disciples that they should cast it out ; and they were not able.' 'And I besought thy disciples to cast it out ; and they could not.' <sup>9 Luke 40</sup> Doubtless that was the reason of the questioning between them and the scribes. Thereupon Jesus uttered an exclamation which is recorded by the three evangelists, and which is of so unusual a character as to require consideration with respect to its possible sense and bearing. 'And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I bear with you ? bring him hither to me.' 'And he answereth them <sup>9 Mark 19</sup> and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I bear with you ? bring him unto me.' 'And Jesus <sup>9 Luke 41</sup> answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and bear with you ? bring hither thy son.' The disciples were 'faithless,' for Jesus attributes their failure to unbelief ; the scribes were 'perverse,' as appears by their questioning criticism on this and other occasions. Yet it may not have been, as at first sight appears, a cry of impatience which escaped from the lips of Jesus. The words 'how long' favour that idea, as though Jesus felt the tedium of existence in such companionship, and longed to be away from an incredulous and opposing world. But Dr. Young renders in each case *heōs pote*, literally, by 'till when.' That allows, if it does not involve a change in the drift of the expression : it does not indicate that Jesus was weary of his prolonged sojourn upon earth, but rather that the time for his personal presence was limited ; he could not long be with them, remedying the want of faith in some and suffering the deliberate perversity of others. The power of counteracting such evils as that now before their eyes, had been placed within the grasp of humanity ; but the disciples had not faith to exercise the power, and those foremost in Jewish learning questioned its origin and condemned its exercise. Was he to remain the only One on earth able and willing to relieve those 'oppressed of the devil ?' How short was the time during which he would be

present to say, as now 'Bring him unto me.' Jesus was speaking of two classes: the 'faithless' disciples, and the 'perverse' scribes: he could remain no long time to 'be with' the former and to 'bear with' the latter. That was the normal condition of his earthly career, and these words were but the natural expression of the fact, not of repining or impatience with respect to it.

The afflicted child was brought to Jesus, and thereupon was seized with what probably would now be deemed an attack of epilepsy.

9 Mark 20 'And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare (or, convulsed) him grievously; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.' Jesus enquired how long he had been subject to such attacks, and was informed that it was from childhood.

21, 22 'And he asked his father, How long time is it since this hath come unto him? And he said, From a child.' The father explained

22 also that suicidal tendencies had often been manifested. 'And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him.' And then came the touching appeal: 'But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.' Apparently the ill-success of the disciples had made the poor father doubtful as to the ability of Jesus himself. Jesus caught at and repeated his expression.

23 'And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst!' In the Authorised Version it stands: 'If thou canst believe.' The Revisers, following the two oldest MSS., have omitted the word 'believe,' and they have added a note of exclamation. Tischendorf, going further with the same object, renders as follows: 'And Jesus said unto him, Why the expression, If thou canst?' Let the original stand without any such addition: the sense must then depend upon the inflexion of the voice. The words 'If thou canst,' spoken without emphasis, seem the meditative repetition of the father's qualification. If uttered as an exclamation, or as an interrogation, they denote astonishment at the existence of such a doubt: 'If thou canst! If thou canst?' If stress be laid upon 'thou,' Jesus seems to indicate that the result depended equally upon the father: he had said, 'If *thou* canst do anything,' and Jesus retorted, 'If *thou* canst,' and adds that anything is possible to one believing. This is equivalent to the introduction of the word 'believe' after 'canst' and probably led to its first insertion in old MSS. In that sense the father seems to have understood the answer:

23 'If *thou* canst. All things are possible to him that believeth.' He could have confidence, and that would make the cure, or any cure, possible. Instantly the distracted father strove to put his mind into that state: 'Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe.' He felt that in this way he must work together with Jesus for his child's recovery, and he begged that the deficiency of his own faith might be helped, supplemented by Jesus: 'help thou mine unbelief.' The Authorised Version stands: 'said with tears, Lord, I believe.' The words 'with tears' are omitted from the three oldest MSS., and in one of them (the Alexandrine) had been expunged by a later hand; and the word 'Lord' is also absent from those three MSS. They are omitted by the Revisers.

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24

Although Jesus reproved the father's doubt and asserted the omnipotence of faith, there is nothing in the narrative to justify the inference that the child's recovery could directly depend on or be owing to the state of the father's mind. Once admit a baseless conclusion



of that kind, and there is no knowing to what an extent it may mislead the judgment. Dean Alford twisted this into an argument in favour of the doctrine of vicarious responsibility in infant baptism. He wrote : ' There is a strong analogy in the Lord's treatment of the father here, for the *sponsorial engagement* in infant baptism. The *child* is by its infirmity *incapacitated* ; it is therefore the *father's faith* which is tested ; and when it is proved, the child is healed.'

There is a hint in the narrative that Jesus broke off the conversation sooner than he might otherwise have done, in order to avoid the unseemly confusion which would have resulted from the influx of a crowd of persons now seen to be running towards them. Alford reminds us : ' This took place at a distance from the crowd, among those who had run forward to meet our Lord, ver. 15.' Those who had stayed behind may have been impatient at the delayed approach of Jesus, and suddenly hastened forward when they became aware that something of interest was taking place at a distance. But it seems more probable that this was altogether a different crowd, collected owing to the news of Jesus' return having been spread in the neighbourhood. ' And when Jesus saw that a multitude came 9 Mark 25 running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.'

Again we stand face to face with the mystery of spiritual possession. To that, the father attributed his child's condition ; but at the same time he called him 'lunatic.' If the supposition were admissible that Jesus, in effecting his cures, was in the habit of adopting the current phraseology, albeit there was no evil spirit to be exorcised, there could be no justification and no reason for his doing so in this case. A recognised form of natural malady had been suggested : it was open to Jesus to endorse either that opinion or the idea of demoniacal influence. He deliberately chose the latter : ' he rebuked the unclean spirit.' He addressed a living personality, perceived by him to labour under the infirmities of dumbness and deafness. He issued a command, 'come out of him,' and a prohibition, 'enter no more into him.' Scientific critics of the present day stand openly at issue with every narrative of this kind. Either the gospel accounts are false, or the criticisms are erroneous. There is no way of reconciling them. The one or the other must be rejected. The New Testament, to say nothing of older records, reveals in various ways, as manifested at different periods and on special occasions, a strange, incomprehensible blending of things physical with things spiritual. We know but two modes of existence, Matter and Life. Everything in the universe must be either the one or the other, or a combination of the two. Surely that is sound philosophy. And who is wise enough to unravel the mysteries of the simplest living organism ? Who can analyze the inexplicable union between Body and Spirit ? Who can presume to define or limit the ways in which the latter can act upon the former ? The evangelists had no scientific theories to uphold or to attack. They simply give a narrative of facts, calmly indifferent as to what conclusions might or might not be drawn from them. Any one who has watched a raving maniac must have been struck with the appositeness of the idea that some foreign, abnormal spiritual influence was

at work within the human organism, loosing the tongue, convulsing the body, giving supernatural strength to the limbs. It would be unsafe and unwise to assume that what looks true must needs be true, and none can question the judiciousness of leaving insanity, in all its forms, to the care of the physician, who regards it and deals with it as a mere disordered condition of the brain. But the strange fact remains, and there is no getting rid of it without impugning the veracity of the gospel writers, that Jesus endorsed the popular notion, gave to it the weight of his authority, spoke repeatedly to and of possessing demons, based his cures upon the conviction of their presence, and deliberately, calmly, gravely professed to expel them by his word and power. If he were deceived as to the cause, how could he have worked to produce the effect? There can be but two opinions upon the subject: either there are or are not spirits, good or evil, in the world, capable of acting upon the minds and bodies of mankind; and the belief that they can so act, and in past times, if not now, have so acted, is either a truth or a delusion. Jesus believed it to be true; unless the gospel records are false, he proved it to be true. He did so in the case before us, when he said: ‘Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And having cried out, and torn (or, convulsed) him much, he came out: and *the child* became as one dead; insomuch that the more part said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose.’ The other accounts agree as to the result, without entering into details. ‘And Jesus rebuked him; and the devil (Gr. demon) went out from him: and the boy was cured from that hour.’ ‘But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.’

The disciples were naturally anxious to ascertain the reason of their want of success in dealing with this case, and at the earliest moment possible they asked Jesus privately to tell them. ‘Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast it out?’ Mark states that the question was put when they got in doors. ‘And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, *saying*, We could not cast it out (or, *How is it* that we could not cast it out?)’ According to Matthew, Jesus explained that it was on account of their lack of faith. ‘And he saith unto them, Because of your little faith.’ The Authorised Version has, ‘Because of your unbelief.’ The Revisers have followed the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. in altering it to ‘little faith.’ And then Jesus uttered these remarkable words: ‘for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.’ The natural, simple meaning of the word ‘faith’ here, as elsewhere, is ‘confidence.’ It has nothing to do with belief in any doctrines; it denotes merely an assurance in the mind, a certainty of conviction, that the thing desired is attainable, and will be attained. The expression ‘unbelief’ may have been inserted as seeming more accurately to express the meaning of Jesus than the reading ‘little faith.’ For he states that the minutest portion of faith, ‘as a grain of mustard seed,’ which ‘is less than all seeds,’ would be sufficient to work the greatest marvels. In what sense are his words to be taken? Are they purely hyperbolic? The idea of removing a

mountain by a word, cannot be accepted literally. But when Jesus uses an exaggerated simile, it must be to impress the mind the more deeply with the truth it is designed to illustrate and enforce. The conclusion he would have his disciples draw from it is given in his own words : ' nothing shall be impossible unto you.' That is not a figure of speech. It is a plain, positive declaration to the effect that results which are to us, at present, astounding, incomprehensible, incredible, nevertheless lie within the compass of the human Will. And it is not a little remarkable that, in dealing with the question of the influence which can be exercised by the mind of man over hostile spiritual forces, Jesus turns aside from the main issue to assert the power of Mind over Matter. This was a teaching altogether new : but it was in perfect harmony with the experiences and manifestations of his own life on earth. Had he not stilled a tempest with his simple, ' Peace, be still ?' Had he not walked upon the sea, and taught Peter also that a strong, unfaltering faith alone was needed to follow his example ? Had he not, in some unaccountable way, multiplied the loaves and fishes ? Was not the possession of such a power recognised by the challenge of the Tempter, ' If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves ?' For three years together the life of Jesus was one daily round of miracles, the triumph of his faith and the faith of others over physical and spiritual obstacles. Nor did he claim or desire to stand alone in the exercise of such gifts, but imparted them freely to his disciples, as they had faith enough to wield them : ' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse <sup>10 Mat. 8</sup> the lepers, cast out demons : freely ye received, freely give.' If only their faith had been strong enough to carry out his injunctions ! We read of no case of leprosy they healed, of no attempt to raise the dead : yet we dare not disguise from ourselves the fact that Jesus conceived such works to be within the compass of their ability, and called upon them to put their powers forth in that direction. And now, when their efforts to exorcise a demon have failed, he attributes their ill-success to their want of faith, and strives to raise them to the level of his own conviction that, endowed therewith, nothing should be impossible to them.

Mark shows no consciousness of this reply of Jesus, but records instead thereof a totally different explanation as given to the disciples. ' And when he was come into the house, his disciples <sup>9 Mark 28,</sup> asked him privately, *saying*, We could not cast it out (or, *How is it* <sup>29</sup> that we could not cast it out ?). And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.' The words ' and fasting' are omitted by the Revisers on the authority of the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. They originally stood in the former, but had been erased by a later hand. In Matthew's account, according to the Authorised Version, Jesus, after speaking of the want of faith, added : ' Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and <sup>17 Mat. 21</sup> fasting.' This verse 21 is omitted from the Revised Version, not being in either of those MSS., and having been expunged from the Sinaitic by a later hand. As that MS. belongs to the middle of the fourth century, it is to be inferred that subsequently an opportunity arose of comparing it with a more reliable if not older copy, and that such alterations as the above resulted from the comparison. According to the Authorised Version, Mark reports, as the sole



explanation offered by Jesus, that which occupied altogether a secondary place in Matthew's account; and according to the Revised Version, Mark describes Jesus as giving one reply and Matthew an entirely different reply. This remarkable discrepancy between the evangelists would seem to have been a difficulty to early harmonisers, and to have been modified by amalgamating the accounts of the evangelists, as though Matthew gave two reasons, one of which was precisely that of Mark. This apparent tampering with Scripture is now rectified in the Revised Version, and we must acknowledge, even though we may not be able to solve, this difficulty: Matthew and Mark agree as to the question, but differ as to the answer; one makes Jesus say it was owing to the want of faith, the other to the want of prayer. But Mark does not really record any question as put to Jesus; that was the inference drawn by translators, but evidently the Revisers lean to the contrary opinion, for they insert in the text, without a note of interrogation, the simple observation, 'We could not cast it out,' and they put an alternative reading, in the form of a question, in the margin. The literal rendering of Mark, as supplied by the 'Englishman's Greek New Testament,' is: 'Because we were not able to cast out it;' that of Matthew: 'Why we were not able to cast out him.' Looking at Mark's account by itself, the matter stands thus: 'When he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Because we were not able to cast out him.' It is rendered literally 'asked him apart.' The only fact here brought out is this: that the disciples made general enquiry, coupled with the admission that their own efforts at exorcism had been ineffectual. And as Mark does not give the special question, neither does he give the special answer; but without touching upon either, he records the observation of Jesus, 'This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.' We are bound to observe the distinction between the expressions 'cast out' and 'come out.' The former denotes exorcism, the latter departure without exorcism; the former is *ekballō*, 'to throw or cast out,' the latter is *exerchomai*, 'to go out, come out of.' On any other view, would not Jesus have contradicted himself? For he had exorcised the demon by command, not by prayer; neither do we find that Jesus ever instructed his disciples to exorcise by prayer. The meaning probably is this: Apart from 'casting out,' there was no way of riddance from the demon except that of earnest desire—prayer—on the part of the possessed one. Luther's German version also indicates the distinction between an enforced and a quasi-voluntary departure, the word used for 'cast out' being 'austreiben,' and that for 'come out' 'ausfahren.'

Whichever view is taken, it may be deemed strange that either Mark should have given a totally different reply from that recorded by Matthew, or should have omitted so important a declaration respecting the power of faith. It must be remembered, however, that Mark was a compiler, not an original recorder; he could only relate what traditions or manuscripts brought to his knowledge, and any imperfections or omissions in them would necessarily attach to his own compilation. Differences between the evangelists are strong evidence of the independence of their respective narratives, and can be accounted for in various satisfactory ways. Mr. J. A. Froude has



observed : \* 'It is on the disagreements in fact that the labours of commentators have chiefly been expended.' But he points out that the real difficulty is rather with respect to the resemblances than with respect to the discrepancies between the evangelists. 'Not only are the things related the same, but the language in which they are expressed is the same. Sometimes the resemblance is such as would have arisen had the evangelists been translating from a common document in another language. Sometimes, and most frequently, there is an absolute verbal identity : sentences, paragraphs, long passages, are word for word the very same ; a few expressions have been slightly varied, a particle transposed, a tense or a case altered, but the differences being no greater than would arise if a number of persons were to write from memory some common passages which they knew almost by heart. That there should have been this identity in the account of the *words* used by our Lord seems at first sight no more than we should expect. But it extends to the narrative as well ; and with respect to the parables and discourses, there is this extraordinary feature, that whereas our Lord is supposed to have spoken in the ordinary language of Palestine, the resemblance between the evangelists is in the Greek translation of them ; and how unlikely it is that a number of persons in translating from one language to another should hit by accident on the same expressions, the simplest experiment will shew.' The narrative before us supplies a case in point. 'He rebuked the unclean spirit.' 'Jesus rebuked him.' 'Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit.' The adoption of the word 'rebuked' by the three evangelists can scarcely have been accidental. The inference drawn by Mr. Froude is as follows : 'Suppose, for instance, the description of a battle ; if we were to find but a single paragraph in which two out of the three correspondents agreed verbally, we should regard it as a very strange coincidence. If all three agreed verbally, we should feel certain it was more than accident. If throughout their letters there was a recurring series of such passages, no doubt would be left in the mind of anyone that either the three correspondents had seen each other's letters, or that each had had before him some common narrative which he had incorporated in his own account. It might be doubtful which of the two explanations was the true one ; but that one or other of them was true, unless we suppose a miracle, is as certain as any conclusion in human things can be certain at all. . . . It may be assumed that the facts connected with them admit a natural explanation ; and we arrive, therefore, at the same conclusion as before : that either two of the evangelists borrowed from the third, or else that there was some other gospel besides those which are now extant ; existing perhaps both in Hebrew and Greek—existing certainly in Greek—the fragments of which are scattered up and down through St. Mark, St. Matthew, and St. Luke, in masses sufficiently large to be distinctly recognizable.' The conclusion thus arrived at by Mr. Froude is confirmed by the careful and thorough investigation undertaken by the authors of 'The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels,' and by the arguments and illustrations contained in the 'Introduction' to that work.

\* *Criticism and the Gospel History.*

Luke describes the effect produced on the minds of the multitude at witnessing the miraculous exorcism: 'And they were all astonished at the majesty of God.' The Authorised Version stands, 'amazed at the mighty power of God,' which Tischendorf leaves unaltered. Alford suggested 'majesty' instead of 'mighty power,' and Young's rendering is: 'And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.' It was their habit of mind to assign a supernatural origin to anything abnormal or inexplicable; the occult powers of our human nature, which were displayed so constantly and so marvellously by Jesus, and which he declared to be within the compass of his disciples, if only they had sufficient faith, were attributed by some of the Jews to Beelzebub, and by others to God. Now there went up a universal chorus of wondering praise, and Jesus bade his disciples mark it well, for the Messiah was on the point of being given over to the judgment and power of the populace. 'But while all were marvelling at all the things which he did, he said unto his disciples, Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men.' Matthew intimates that this was part of a special discourse of Jesus. 'And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them . . . .'. Mark states that the discourse of Jesus was at that time altogether on this one subject, and that he was anxious to keep their journey private on that account. 'And they went forth from thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them.' And his prophecy of coming sorrows was plainer and fuller than would be inferred from Luke's account. 'The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again.' 'The Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised up.' This was simply a repetition of what Jesus had previously told them, and what Peter had rebuked him for saying, thereby drawing down upon himself the startling reproof, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' No words could be clearer: the death of Jesus at the hands of men was near at hand. The hearts of the disciples were filled with sorrow at the impending catastrophe. 'And they were exceeding sorry.' In face of this, the observation of Mark sounds strangely: 'But they understood not the saying, and were afraid to ask him.' Yet Luke confirms this: 'But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.' The Authorised Version, instead of 'that they should not perceive it,' has, 'that they perceived it not;,' on which Alford observes: 'The sense here is not to be evaded by forcing it, as A. V., to mean "so that they did not . . ." but to be literally rendered, "that they might not." It was the *divine purpose* that they should not at present be aware of the full significance of these words.' Tischendorf and Young also adopt, 'that they might not.' Admitting the correctness of that translation, the inference drawn from it by Alford is still open to question. His idea is, that some supernatural, divinely-originated influence worked upon their minds to obscure the meaning of the statement made by Jesus. No words could be plainer; it was not the first time they had been spoken; on the former occasion

9 Luke 43

9 Luke 43,  
44

17 Mat. 22

9 Mark 30

,, 31

17 Mat. 23

8 Mark 33

17 Mat. 23

9 Mark 32

9 Luke 45

Peter understood them only too well, for he took upon himself to reprove Jesus for uttering them. How could their import possibly become less clear by repetition? Consider what such an idea involves. Jesus had, in the first instance, spoken the saying openly: are we to assume that in some mysterious, incomprehensible way, the mental perceptions of, at the least, twelve men, are now so acted upon as to blunt their power of comprehending the plain meaning of plainest words? Is it to be supposed that what Jesus was specially anxious to teach his disciples, making his journey through Galilee as private as possible with that object, it was 'the divine purpose' should only be imperfectly comprehended? Surely there must be some other, simpler, more rational explanation than that, of the statement of Luke, 'they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.' Three statements were made by Jesus: (1) That the Messiah should be delivered up; (2) that he should be killed; (3) that he should be raised again. Luke alludes only to the first of these; and to a Jewish mind it must have appeared strange and incomprehensible. All their national hopes and aspirations were centred in their expected Messiah. He was to be the King, Ruler, Deliverer of Israel. But Jesus, discarding all such anticipations, dwells upon one aspect only of his history, and that a most depressing one: 'the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men.' They looked for a mighty Saviour; his words pointed rather to a condemned criminal; they trusted that the culmination of his career would be the restoration of the kingdom to Israel; his forecast of the future implied an ignominious drifting into a condition of utter helplessness. It was wholly beyond their power to imagine any possible solution of the contradiction between their vision of success and his deliberate prediction of failure. And it would be failure final and irreparable, involving the loss of his life. All this was a mystery to them; and his talk about rising again after three days was enigmatical, too contrary to all human experience to be accepted literally, and too indefinite, regarded as a metaphor, to convey any idea of its true significance: 'it was veiled from them, that they might not perceive it.' But why were they so afraid to ask of him its meaning? We are not told; probably they shrank from doing so, lest they should only find their worst fears confirmed. It was enough, more than enough, that he anticipated the loss of liberty and of life; he would be sure, if questioned, to confirm his sad sayings, and to grieve their souls as well as his own by the amplification of his coming sorrows.

Although Jesus remained in Galilee, he was not suffered to escape the observation and criticism of his enemies in Judæa. Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem listened to his teachings and watched his conduct. They took note that his disciples failed to observe with due punctiliousness the traditionally-imposed ablutions customary with themselves before meals. 'And there are gathered together 7 Mark 1, 2 unto him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled (or, common), that is, unwashed hands.' The evangelist explains that ceremonial observances with respect to personal cleanliness and the scouring of culinary utensils were



7 Mark 3, 1 regarded as obligatory upon all Jews. 'For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently (or, up to the elbow, Gr. with the fist), eat not, holding the tradition of the elders : and *when they come* from the market place, except they wash (Gr. baptize) themselves, they eat not ; and many other things there be, which they have received to hold, washings (Gr. baptizings) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels.' In the Authorised Version, verse 2 ends with the words 'they found fault,' which are now omitted, not being in three oldest MSS. In verse 3 the Authorised Version has, 'wash *their* hands oft ;' Tischendorf retains the word 'often,' but the Revisers instead thereof have 'diligently (or, up to the elbow, Gr. with the fist),' which Young renders 'to the wrist,' and the Englishman's Greek New Testament 'with the fist.' It is not easy to understand, no explanation being given, how the Greek expression 'with the fist' can signify 'up to the elbow :' to wash 'with the fist' or 'with the wrist' seems to denote thorough washing, not by mere immersion. Tischendorf reads *pukna*, often, instead of *pugnēi*, to the wrist or fist. Alford explains the uncertainty attaching to the translation : 'The word *oft* thus rendered has perplexed all the Commentators. Of the various renderings which have been given of it, two only seem to be admissible : (1) that given in the text, *oft* ; and (2) *diligently*, which is adopted by the ancient Syriac version, and seems agreeable to Hebrew usage. Between these two it is not easy to decide.' Among the articles enumerated as washed the Authorised Version includes 'and of tables,' translated by Young 'and couches.' This is now omitted, not being in the two oldest MSS.

It is not stated that Jesus himself was, on this occasion, accused of neglecting the recognized code of purification, but he was called upon to explain why those who were his disciples did so. 'And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled (or, common) hands ?' Matthew's account is to the same effect. 'Then there come from Jesus to Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders ? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.' Jesus retorted by applying to his questioners the condemnation which had once been pronounced by Isaiah. 'And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

This people honoureth me with their lips,

But their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me,

Teaching *as their* doctrines the precepts of men.'

29 Isa. 13 The original passage is as follows : 'Forasmuch as this people draw nigh *unto me*, and with their mouth and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught *them* (or, learned *by rote*).' Jesus charged them with laxity in respect of God's command, and rigidity in respect of human precepts. 'Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.' The Authorised Version adds : '*as the* washing of pots and cups : and many other such like things ye do,' which is now omitted on the authority of the two oldest MSS. Jesus proceeded to give a particular instance, in which traditional usage was diametrically opposed to the spirit and



practice of a divine command. 'And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition.' Matthew puts the observation of Jesus in the shape of a question. 'And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?' Jesus proceeds: 'For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death (or, surely die): but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother: making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.' Let us compare this with Matthew's account. Down to the word 'death' there is a perfect verbal agreement, except that Mark has 'Moses said,' and Matthew 'God said.' Mark's, 'If a man shall say,' becomes in Matthew, 'Whosoever shall say.' The words in Mark, 'Corban, that is to say,' are omitted by Matthew. Mark's, 'ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother,' is represented in Matthew by, 'he shall not honour his father.' Mark's, 'making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered,' stands in Matthew, 'and ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition.' Mark's, 'and many such like things ye do,' is omitted by Matthew. The quotation from Isaiah agrees word for word, but is placed by Mark at the beginning and by Matthew at the end, being prefaced by the former with the words, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,' and by the latter with the words, 'Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying.' Here, as so often elsewhere in these independent evangelistic records of the same event, two things are unmistakably, undeniably obvious: a substantial agreement as to the facts, and discrepancies, amounting occasionally to inaccuracies, with respect to the details. Common sense often stands in the way of any attempt at reconciliation. Did Jesus say, 'Moses said,' or 'God said?' What justification would there be for supposing that he said both, and that Mark seized on the former and Matthew on the latter? Did Jesus quote Isaiah's words at the beginning or the end of his discourse? Must we not admit that one of the evangelists has fallen into an error with respect to their position? Variations of this kind do not affect in the least the credibility of the narrative; on the contrary, they are evidences of good faith, independence, and absence of collusion. Every recorded event is subject to the mistakes and imperfections of the historians. Even eye witnesses differ materially in their accounts of what they have carefully observed, and no two persons would be likely to agree, in the absence of note-taking, as to the words uttered by a public speaker. But this easy, natural, rational explanation of the divergences which abound in the gospels, is not admissible in connection with any claim to their having been 'inspired.' Modify the theory of 'inspiration' as you will, you must admit the existence of errors, misapprehensions, contradictions, which must proceed either from the Spirit who inspires or from the writer who is inspired. If the former, you attribute to the divine Spirit human infirmities: if the latter, the inspiration being defective with respect to small matters, it cannot possibly be relied on, or assumed

to exist, with respect to the greater. It is high time the Christian Church should face this doctrine boldly, and recognize the simple truth that the only inspiration claimable or needful for the writers of the New Testament is that which is equally claimable and needful for all faithful historians,—the inspiration of a truthful spirit and of a clear intellect. Let those who still cling to the idea of Inspiration grapple as they can with its attendant difficulties. Here are some of them. Accepting the tradition as to the authorship of the four gospels, it must be admitted that Matthew and John, being apostles, received those distinct promises of teaching by the Holy Spirit upon which the dogma of Inspiration rests, and which Mark and Luke did not receive. It follows, that whenever there is a discrepancy between the evangelists, those who rely upon Inspiration are bound to be guided by Matthew and John in preference to Mark and Luke. Who among Inspirationists will be bold enough to accept and act upon that most reasonable conclusion? And if it be accepted and acted upon, does not the argument as to the inspiration of *all* Scripture at once fall to pieces. Again, as regards the apostles themselves. It surely cannot be assumed that their writings only, and not also their spoken words and actions were inspired. But as regards the latter, we are assured that Peter was on one occasion far from being truthful, immaculate, infallible. Paul says of him: ‘I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned.’ He accused Peter and certain other Jews of ‘dissimulation,’ and seeing ‘that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel,’ he expostulated with Peter ‘before *them* all.’ If an apostle could thus fall into errors and mistakes in one way, why not in another? And we may ask, not irreverently but by way of serious argument, What permanent benefit to mankind could have resulted from the supernatural illumination and guidance which the theory of Inspiration assumes to have been granted to the writers of the New Testament? To become widely useful, the books must needs be copied, and we have abundant evidence of the errors into which copyists and commentators have fallen. To have preserved the integrity of the first miraculously-inspired manuscripts, a constant succession of miraculous interpositions would have been required. Even that much has been assumed. Half a century, even a quarter of a century ago, when the theory of verbal inspiration had not been tacitly dismissed by most preachers, but still found many supporters, much more frequent references than now were made to ‘the watchful care of Divine Providence over God’s holy word.’ The doctrine of inspiration has changed with the times, and is still changing. Fluctuations of opinion with respect to it are more possible than is the case with other theological tenets, because it has never been embodied in any set form by the authority of the Church. ‘It is an undeniable fact that no creed or formulary of any Church has ever asserted that the Bible is to be literally and prosaically interpreted, or that its accuracy and historical correctness are supernaturally guaranteed. It is not in any decree of Rome, nor in any creed or article of our Church, nor in any pledge exacted from laymen at baptism or from clergy on taking orders. The Church has never laid down any theory of inspiration.’ That statement is made by the Rev. J. M. Wilson in a pamphlet on ‘The Theory of Inspiration,’ issued by the Society for promoting Christian Know-

ledge. Alluding to the period of the Reformation, he quotes from Westcott's 'Introduction to the study of the Gospels : ' 'Men began to attribute to the Bible the same mechanical infallibility which the Romanists had claimed for the Church. The Calvinists maintained the direct and supernatural action of a guiding power on the very words of the inspired writer without any regard to his personal or national position. Every part of Scripture was held to be not only pregnant with instruction, but with instruction of the same kind and in the same sense.' The Rev. J. M. Wilson proceeds as follows : 'Men like broad, simple, unqualified statements which save the trouble of thought. Such a statement was the Calvinistic theory of inspiration, that it was an external influence on man which gave a divine guarantee against all error ; that from Genesis to Revelation not only is the Bible the Word of God, but the words of God : and it is this theory which lands men in endless contradictions. Such is the historic origin of this theory fifteen centuries after the books were written. But is the theory true ? Listen to what is said of it : "The purely organic (that is mechanical) theory of inspiration rests on no Scriptural authority, and, if we except a few ambiguous metaphors, is supported by no historical testimony. It is at variance with the whole form and fashion of the Bible, and it is destructive of all that is holiest in man and highest in religion." These are the words of one writer. Now I will read you the words of another : "It will not do to say that it is not verbally inspired. If the words are not inspired, what is ?" Now who are these writers ? Who is this Secularist who thus denies the verbal inspiration of the Bible ? He is the greatest living authority on the history of the Bible, the Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, Canon Westcott, whose text books are used by all candidates for the ministry in our Church, and are almost universally studied by Nonconformists ; one, I need hardly say, who holds the Inspiration of Scripture not less tenaciously than I do. And who is this theologian, this champion of the faith, who so strongly asserts verbal inspiration as the theory held by Christians ? He is the well-known Secularist writer of America, whose works are diligently circulated among some of you, Colonel Robert Ingersoll. But I ask what right has he to put into the mouths of Christians a definition of inspiration which is so utterly unsubstantiated by Scripture, by historical testimony, repudiated by the greatest living theologians, and by the vast majority, if not the whole, of the educated ministers in the world ? I do not charge him with dishonesty ; I see no trace of dishonesty in his book. I see ignorance of historical facts, and an insensibility to the spiritual side of human nature. But is it not deplorable that such a writer should dress up a caricature of Christianity in his ignorance, and hold it up to ridicule in his presumption ?'

Is not this condemnation misplaced and unfair ? Here are two men, living at the same time, each attacking and seeking to overthrow the theory of 'verbal inspiration.' The one is a Professor of Divinity, whose arguments are esteemed valid and necessary ; the other is a Secularist, who is said to be arguing against exploded, antiquated ideas ! Are they not fellow-workers in the same crusade against the same error ? It is cheering to be told that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is now 'repudiated by the greatest *living* theologians ;'



it is not by any means certain that it is also repudiated 'by the vast majority, if not the whole, of the educated Christian ministers in the world.' Neither can the Rev. J. M. Wilson be right when he adds: 'I am stating the doctrine of the Church of England,' for he had already said that 'the Church has never laid down any theory of inspiration,' and the words he quotes from 'the Bishop of Winchester, a living bishop,' leave the question an open, undecided one, 'whether every book of the Old Testament was written so completely under the dictation of God's Holy Spirit that every word, not only doctrinal but also historical and scientific must be infallibly correct and true.' We are not told that the Bishop repudiated that doctrine, and it is certain that he was not anxious that others should repudiate it as 'a definition of inspiration which is so utterly unsubstantiated by Scripture,' and 'by historical testimony;' on the contrary, he says: 'It is a secondary consideration and a question on which we may safely agree to differ.' That the doctrine of verbal inspiration had taken a firm hold on the minds of the community, and had come to be regarded as a settled conviction, is proved by the definition of the word 'Inspiration' as it still stands in Webster's dictionary: 'The supernatural influence of the Spirit of God on the human mind, by which the prophets, apostles, and sacred writers were qualified to set forth divine truth without any mixture of error.' When lexicographers have discarded that meaning of the word 'inspiration,' and not till then, it will be time to contend that such a meaning has ceased to be attached to the word. Until that time shall come, it is equally absurd and unjust to deride those who argue against verbal inspiration, as though they were fighting a shadow and misrepresenting the doctrine. Good service will be done by reiterating, in varying forms, the truth uttered by Colonel Robert Ingersoll: 'It will not do to say that it is not verbally inspired. If the words are not inspired, what is?' In vain does the author of the 'Theory of Inspiration' seek to answer that question. Having repudiated verbal inspiration, what remains which can be termed inspiration? Here is his vague, roundabout definition of it: 'The truth is that the belief in inspiration is not the portal by which you enter the temple: it is the atmosphere you breathe when you have entered. You may become a Christian, most men do become Christians, from finding in the life and sayings and death of Jesus Christ something that touches them, something that finds them, something that is a revelation of divine love to the human heart. Men find that there is something in them dear and precious to God. And then love springs up in them, and a new life begins. They look out on the world with larger and more loving eyes. They see God in their brethren, God in nature, and God in their Bibles. In their Bibles they read of the Christ whom they love. Those pages are filled with power that moves the soul; never man spake as this man, never book spake as this book. And this, and this only, is the theory of inspiration that Christians must needs possess.' According to this, the inspiration is as much in the reader as in the writer, and as much in nature as in the Bible. Would it not be far better, having rejected the Calvinistic doctrine of 'the direct and supernatural action of a guiding power on the very words of the inspired writer,' to cease to talk about inspiration altogether? Why fight still for the doctrine of



'inspiration,' when the meaning attached to it by our forefathers is judged untenable? It was a huge error: away with it; uproot it from the minds in which it still lingers, so that the word, in the sense first given to it by Calvinists, may be banished from our dictionaries. The doctrine was a noxious weed; do not disguise the fact by confusing its name with that of the flower you sow in place thereof.

Alford defines the word 'Corban:' 'an offering without a sacrifice.' Young renders it 'offering:' 'Whoever may say to father or mother, An offering whatever thou mayest be profited by me . . . ' But ye say, If a man say to father or to mother, Korban <sup>7 Mark 11</sup> (that is, an offering), whatever thou mightest be profited by me . . . ' They allowed a man to plead that his property, which might have been applied to the support of his parents, was already dedicated to the service of God. The principle being admitted, it became liable to misapplication and abuse. Alford notes: 'Lightfoot on this verse shews that the expression cited by our Lord did not always bind the utterer to consecrate his property to religious uses, but was by its mere utterance sufficient to absolve him from the duty of caring for his parents.' Jesus regarded the human duty as a divine duty to which no other obligation could be paramount, and the idea of giving to God by wrongfully withholding from man, as a traditional fiction devised to escape obedience to the divine command. The duty which lies nearest to us is ever the most sacred and obligatory, and our fanciful modes of serving God must give place to family and social claims.

The variations in the readings of the old manuscripts in this part of the narrative are as follows. In Matthew's account: In verse 1 <sup>15 Mat. 1</sup> the Authorised Version describes the scribes and Pharisees as 'of Jerusalem;' in the Revised Version it reads 'which had come from Jerusalem,' the two oldest MSS. having, 'then came to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes.' In verse 2 'their hands' is in the same two MSS. 'the hands.' In verse 3, the Sinaitic omitted 'also,' but the word had been inserted by a later hand. In verse 4, the same two MSS., omit 'thy,' before 'father,' though the Revisers retain it, and also insert it before 'mother,' Tischendorf putting 'the.' In verse 5 the Sinaitic had after 'by me' the words 'it is nothing,' erased by a later hand. In verse 6 the words 'and honour not' stand in the two oldest MSS. 'he shall not at all honour,' the words 'or his mother' being omitted as in the Revised Version. In verse 8 the words in the Authorised Version, 'draweth nigh unto me with their mouth' are now omitted, not being in the two oldest MSS. In Mark's account: In verse 2 the words in the Authorised Version, 'they found fault,' are now omitted, not being in the three oldest MSS. In verse 4 the words, 'and of tables,' are omitted by the Revisers, not being in the two oldest MSS., and in verse 5, on the same authority, 'then' has been altered to 'and,' and 'unwashed' to 'defiled.' In verse 6 the words, 'answered and,' are omitted, and in verse 8 the word 'for' and the words, 'and the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do;' on the same authority. Copyists have altered as being unconscious of any theory of verbal inspiration: they, like printers, must have been too much

accustomed to errors and corrections of errors to assume the possibility of infallible verbal accuracy.

The interview with the Pharisees and scribes appears to have been in private, for we are told that at the termination of his discourse Jesus called the people together for the purpose of addressing them. 15 Mat. 10 'And he called to him the multitude, and said unto them . . .' In Mark's account the Revisers have introduced, on the authority of the two oldest MSS., the word 'again,' which seems to indicate that the public address of Jesus had been interrupted or deferred by the argument with the Pharisees and scribes. 7 Mark 14 'And he called to him the multitude again, and said unto them . . .' And he scrupled not to impress upon the public his own views with respect to the question raised by his opponents. They had expostulated about the neglect of external ceremonial ablution; Jesus went far more deeply into the subject, and taught that there was no possibility of defilement from the food eaten, laying down the principle that no contamination could arise from anything introduced into the system from without, but that, on the contrary, things defiled and defiling arose and issued from within. This doctrine was uttered with great earnestness of manner, Jesus prefixing it with the words, 'Hear, and understand.' 15 Mat. 10 'Hear me all of you, and understand.' Mark and Matthew give the saying of Jesus precisely in the same sense, but without actual verbal agreement, the former using the plural where the latter uses the singular. 7 Mark 14 'There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man.' 15 Mat. 14 'Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man.' The Authorised Version adds to Mark another verse: 'If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear;' that is now omitted, on the authority of the two oldest MSS. If that saying had been in Matthew's narrative, the conclusion would be natural, that it was interpolated into Mark by some one who had compared the two evangelists and assumed an omission to have been made in Mark. But as it has never appeared in any manuscript of Matthew's gospel, we must conclude either (1) that the verse was inserted in Mark by some copyist without authority, or (2) that it was omitted from some copy of Mark by oversight. In the former case, either the insertion must have been made after the middle of the fourth century, which is the date of the oldest MS. (the Sinaitic); or, if inserted previously, must have been deliberately rejected by the compilers of the Sinaitic Codex. In the latter case, we must suppose the omission to have been made prior to the time of the Sinaitic MS., and that the compilers thereof were ignorant of any MS. in which the verse appeared. There is, however, another way of looking at the matter. The first edition of a manuscript book must be the author's original; but the oldest copy which happens to be extant may differ from the original. Before the days of printing, an author had no opportunity of supervising copies of his manuscript, and an error or omission made by one transcriber could very easily be perpetuated in future copies. On the other hand, it is possible that a document of so important a character may have been reissued under the hand or superintendence of its author, and in a second

issue he would naturally correct any mistake or omission in the first, of which he had become conscious. Possibly this may account for some of the discrepancies so often noted by the Revisers between 'many ancient authorities' and the oldest MSS. now in existence. But here again, in dealing with the question by the light of reason and common sense, there is no room for the idea of supernatural aid or 'inspiration : ' we cannot venture to suppose that the omniscient Holy Spirit of God would dictate imperfectly at first, or that Matthew would presume to alter anything subsequently, if conscious of having received divine assistance. How various are the difficulties and dilemmas connected with the humanly-elaborated theories of inspiration !

We are not told what effect was produced on the minds of the Pharisees and scribes by the argument of Jesus against their traditions ; but when he proceeded further to broach publicly the doctrine that no defilement could arise through the eating of food, they were shocked and scandalised. This was so obvious to the disciples, and Jesus seemed to be so utterly unconscious or indifferent about it, that they asked him whether he was aware of the offence he had given. ' Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended (Gr. caused to stumble), when they heard this saying ? ' Jesus, in reply, justified the utterance of his opinions, on the ground of the necessity which existed of eradicating every doctrine which was not based upon divine authority. ' But he answered and said, Every plant (Gr. planting) which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up.' It was enough to have refuted the Pharisees and scribes. Having done so, Jesus counsels his disciples to trouble themselves no further about them or their opinions. ' Let them alone.' The false notions of duty traditionally perpetuated, must be opposed and uprooted ; but the upholders of the traditions were to be left free to retain and express, if they would, their long-cherished, erroneous convictions. In the parable of the tares sown among wheat an express command was given not to attempt any uprooting of the former, because the tares there represented persons. Here again the same advice is given : the men must be let alone, their false teachings only opposed and destroyed. How much of embittered conflict would have been avoided, how many fires of persecution never kindled, had the Church understood and acted upon this wise counsel of Jesus ! He assured his disciples that, without any effort or interference on his or their part, discredit and dishonour would be sure to overtake those who were obstinately and persistently blind to that which was true and right. ' Let them alone : they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.' The word ' ditch ' in the Authorised Version is retained by Tischendorf and Young, and seems more appropriate than ' pit : ' Jesus evidently intended to represent a calamity which had more of degradation than of danger. He would never have advised the letting alone of two blind men rushing towards destruction. The catastrophe he contemplates is one which can be regarded with equanimity and even satisfaction : better far a crisis of that kind, than that the blind should go gropingly and self-confidently forward, as though they saw clearly and could not stumble. The expression ' they are blind guides ' stands in the Authorised Version, ' they be blind leaders of the blind : ' the words

15 Mat. 12

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13 Mat. 23

15 Mat. 14,  
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'of the blind' are omitted in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., having been erased in the former by a later hand.

Peter asked Jesus to give them a clearer explanation of his words.

15 Mat. 15 'And Peter answered and said unto him, Declare unto us the parable.' Mark states that the question was put on behalf of the disciples generally, when they had gone into the house away from the crowd.

7 Mark 17 'And when he was entered into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked of him the parable.' Alford observes: 'The saying which is clearly the subject of the question, was not strictly a *parable*, but a plain declaration; so that either Peter took it for a parable, or the word must be taken in its wider sense of "an hard saying." Stier thinks that their questioning as to the meaning of parables (previously) had habituated them to asking for explanations in this form.' The word *parable* is rendered by Young here and elsewhere 'simile.' The word *parabolē*, is defined: 'a placing beside, comparison: illustration, parable.' Jesus expressed astonishment at their lack of apprehension shown by their putting the question.

15 Mat. 16 'And he said, Are ye also even yet without understanding?' 'And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also?' Here again there is a slight difference between the evangelists, one reporting the expression 'even yet,' the other 'also.' There was nothing parabolic in the matter: it was simply one of ordinary perception.

15 Mat. 17 'Perceive ye not, that whatever goeth into the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?' Mark gives the observation more fully.

7 Mark. 18, 19 'Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him: because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? *This he said*, making all meats clean.' In the Authorised Version the last words form part of the question: 'into the draught, purging all meats?' The Revisers have taken upon themselves to introduce the words 'this he said,' which are not expressed or necessarily understood in the original: the natural process of 'purging all meats' is transformed into an act on the part of Jesus, as though he, in saying what he did, was 'making all meats clean.' Tischendorf admits no such idea: his rendering is: 'It cannot defile him, because it enters not into his heart but into the belly, and goes out into the sewer, which cleanses all the food.' Young is to the same effect: 'It entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and into the drain goeth out, purifying all the meats.' The translation of Samuel Sharpe runs thus: 'Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, making pure all the meats.' Luther's rendering is in the same sense: 'Denn es gehet nicht in sein Herz, sondern in den Bauch, und gehet aus durch den natürlichen Gang, der alle Speise ausfeget.' Alford recognized no such gloss as that introduced by the Revisers; on the contrary, he inserted this note: '*purging*. The participle refers to the draught (sewer). There need not be any difficulty in this additional clause: what is stated is *physically* true. The *sewer* is that which, by the removal of the part carried off, purifies the meat; the portion available for nourishment being in its passage converted into chyle, and the remainder being cast out.'

The explanation given to the disciples was simply an enlargement of what Jesus had previously told the multitude.

7 Mark 20 'And he said,



‘That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man.’ This is given a little fuller by Matthew. ‘But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man.’ Jesus specified the evils: ‘For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man.’ The word ‘blasphemies’ in the Authorised Version is now rendered ‘railings;’ in Young’s translation it stands ‘evil speakings.’ In Mark’s account seven additional sins are mentioned. ‘For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts (Gr. thoughts that are evil) proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.’ The list agrees with the Authorised Version, except that the order has been altered on the authority of the two oldest MSS., and that ‘covetousness’ is now rendered ‘covetings;’ ‘wickedness’ is made plural, and ‘blasphemy’ is now ‘railing.’ Young renders ‘evil thoughts’ by ‘the evil reasonings,’ ‘covetings’ by ‘covetous desires,’ ‘lasciviousness’ by ‘arrogance,’ ‘railing’ by ‘evil speaking.’ According to Matthew, Jesus concluded with the remark: ‘But to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.’ This may be taken as indicating that Jesus did not touch upon any other question than that of ‘defilement’ arising from neglect of ceremonial ablutions, and only by implication, if at all, on the distinctions in the Mosaic law between food clean and unclean. Long afterwards Peter was prepared to argue against any infringement of Jewish customs in this matter: ‘Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean.’

The discussion with the Pharisees and scribes probably occurred in some part of Gennesaret. There was small inducement for Jesus to continue his mission southward, seeing that these influential emissaries from Jerusalem had come as far as Galilee to criticise if not to oppose him. He retired still further, travelling north-west to the extreme borders of Judæa. ‘And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon.’ Matthew describes his journey as a withdrawal. ‘And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon.’ But his fame had gone before him. A Gentile woman sought him out, and importuned him for help. She addressed him as the expected Messiah of the Jews, and sought to interest him on behalf of her daughter. ‘And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil (Gr. demon).’ Young renders: ‘Deal kindly with me, lord, Son of David, my daughter is miserably demonized.’ This appears to have been shouted out publicly: ‘she cried,’ rendered by Young, ‘she called.’ Probably she was hastening after Jesus, and not sure that she could overtake him. But there were limits even to his capacity for labour; he had come thither for retirement, and was not prepared to commence in those parts a course of healing similar to that which had taxed his time and strength so heavily already. Therefore he disregarded her appeal, and continued on his course without answering, or even seeming to notice it. ‘But he answered her not a word.’ But she

15 Mat. 23

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7 Mark 24

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15 Mat. 25

7 Mark 27

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was earnestly bent on gaining his ear, and sought by continuous crying to compel his attention ; or it may rather be inferred that, finding she could draw no answer whatever from him, she tried in the same way to interest his disciples on her behalf. So persistent and annoying was this outcry, that they came to Jesus, and besought him to stop it by himself dismissing the woman. ‘ And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away ; for she crieth after us.’ The readiest way of doing that would be to grant her prayer ; but Jesus was not disposed to yield to her importunity. Nor is that to be wondered at. It was necessary that a limit should be placed somewhere to his labours, and he was resolved to draw the line here, at Jewish nationality. To no Israelite would he turn a deaf ear, but he lay under no obligation to extend his sphere of activity beyond his own people. ‘ But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ The words import that Jesus realised clearly the nature and scope of his efforts : he had a well-defined plan of action ; on the one hand, there was a large section, constituting the upper and influential class of his countrymen, who were not disposed to accept his teaching, and whom his ministry did not touch ; on the other hand, there lay on the outskirts of Judæa a mass of heathenism with which he felt himself wholly unable to cope, and any attempt in that direction would have marred his usefulness in another, especially taking into account the prejudice which would have been excited against him if it could be shown that he, being a Jew, had gone out as a preacher and healer among Gentiles. He chose as his peculiar care the lowest and most ‘ lost ’ among his own countrymen ; he was resolved to devote his efforts and his life to their improvement, and that field of labour was so vast, the harvest therein so plenteous, and the labourers so few, that he must not be tempted to overstep its borders. That idea had become deeply impressed upon his mind : he must do that work heartily, and he could attempt no other : ‘ I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ For once in his life, Jesus remained obdurate to the cry of distress. The narrative is here taken up by Mark, who states that Jesus, in his anxiety to escape importunity, entered into a house, and took precautions against a disclosure of his whereabouts. ‘ And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it.’ It was in vain : the evangelist adds, ‘ and he could not be hid.’ The clamorous woman followed, and managed to obtain access to him. ‘ But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Greek (or, Gentile), a Syrophenician by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil (Gr. demon) out of her daughter.’ Her attitude was reverential, and her words few. Matthew says simply : ‘ But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.’ Young renders : ‘ And having come, she was bowing to him.’ Mark states that she carried this mark of respect to the extent of absolute prostration : ‘ fell down at his feet.’ Jesus, however, was still disposed to remain firm to his purpose. He explained to her his reason : ‘ And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled,’ which Young renders : ‘ Suffer first the children to be filled.’ And he contended, in his way of putting the refusal, that it was but right and reasonable. ‘ For it is not meet to take the

children's bread (or, loaf) and cast it to the dogs,' with which Matthew agrees word for word. Young renders in both passages, 'the little dogs.' These are the only passages in which the diminutive occurs, and Alford lays stress on it. He says: 'Literally, *little dogs*. No contempt is indicated by the *diminutive*, still less any allusion to the *daughter* of the woman: the word is commonly used of *tame* dogs, as diminutives frequently express familiarity.' It was a homely simile, by which Jesus sought to convince the woman that his failure to attend to her request was dictated by the necessity and fitness of things, that nearer and more pressing claims forbade his overstepping that sphere of duty and helpfulness which he had felt it incumbent upon him to lay down and limit. The woman acknowledged the justice of the argument: she and her nation could claim no right to the 'loaf' which was reserved for the Jewish people by their own Messiah; she neither asked nor expected it; but taking his own simile as her warrant, she pleaded that a few crumbs must needs fall from the children's table for her and such as her. 'But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' Mark reports her reply somewhat differently, suppressing the word 'master's,' and alluding to the place of the dogs as 'under the table.' 'But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord: even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.' These Gentile 'little dogs,' however inferior, were living in very close proximity to the Jews, and surely might hope for occasional stray crumbs of help and comfort. The woman's answer was well-conceived, bright, clever, true and touching. Jesus would take it as justifying an exception in her favour. 'And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way.' This point is not brought out by Matthew, who has preserved another feature of the commendation bestowed on her by Jesus. 'Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt.' As nothing saddened Jesus more than the want of faith, so nothing delighted him more than the exhibition of a strong faith. His expression, 'Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt,' was a call to further faith. The woman had not brought her daughter, neither did Jesus propose to go to her. It must be enough that he simply spoke the word. We may assume the saying recorded by Matthew to have been uttered first. 'O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt;' and then, seeing the woman stand in uncertainty, he made his meaning clear by adding, 'For this saying go thy way; the devil (Gr. demon) is gone out of thy daughter.' The evangelists ascertained the fact that these words were verified by the event. Matthew says that the cure took place at that precise time: 'And her daughter was healed from that hour.' Mark explains: 'And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the devil (Gr. demon) gone out.'

Jesus having departed from the borders of Tyre and Sidon returned to the lake of Galilee. 'And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee.' That is all Matthew tells us, but Mark describes the long round Jesus made before reaching Galilee. 'And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis.' The journey would be about 150 miles. The author of 'Gospel



Difficulties' summarises it thus : ' A period of two or three months, during which, after passing through the district of Sidon, Christ journeys through the heart of the populous district of the Ten cities, His journey thus ending on "the other side," or Eastern shore, of the Sea of Galilee.' Not a single incident of that journey is recorded. Jesus doubtless adhered to his purpose of not teaching or healing in the Gentile countries through which he passed. It seems to have been merely a walking tour, and there is no indication or probability that Jesus was accompanied by his twelve apostles. Matthew simply announces the fact of his departure and return. It will be remembered that some time previously Jesus was anxious to secure for his apostles and himself a period of retirement and repose, but that the multitude 'saw them going,' 'ran together on foot,' and were found waiting his arrival when he reached the 'desert place' in which they had resolved to 'rest awhile.' He taught and fed the multitude, and only escaped their continued presence by his mysterious crossing of the lake in the night. When he reached the other side, it was only to recommence his course of labours 'whosoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country.' To obtain the relaxation so needful for them all, it would seem that Jesus resolved to 'withdraw' (that is the word used by Matthew) to the border-land of Judæa. There, however, he was pursued by the Syro-Phœnician woman, and 'could not be hid.' Accompanied by his twelve disciples, it was found impossible, go where he would, to escape recognition and importunity. It was better they should separate, and that he should travel alone. That would seem to have been resolved upon. At all events, no hint is given of any one accompanying him, and no incident of the journey is related. What must have been the thoughts of Jesus as he passed, in outward seeming an obscure traveller, from place to place? What events happened to him on the way? Surely his ardent, effusive soul could not have maintained for so long a time complete reserve and silence. There must have been outbursts of instructive conversation, if even with most unlikely, unpromising persons, as once before with the woman at the well in Samaria. There must have been occasional overflowings of sympathy from his loving heart; perchance now and again some miracle of mercy performed unostentatiously, and so unexpectedly that before he could be thanked and withheld the mysterious stranger had gone far upon his way. 'I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Yet how must his soul have longed to shed the gospel light and joy far and wide among the benighted heathen through whose land he passed! How must he have delighted in the constant change of scene, for never was there a more acute observer of nature in her varying forms, or of mankind in their several relationships. How deep, how solemn, must have been his solitary musings! To him so long a 'holiday' would be indeed one uninterrupted 'holy day.' As each step of the way recruited his overwrought frame, and imparted new elasticity to body and mind, how firmly would he nerve himself to face that dark, inevitable future which had been revealed to him! With what depth of meaning would the prophecies to be fulfilled in him come home to his mind! With what earnestness of devotion and self-sacrifice would he resolve to spend his time, his strength, his life, in the cause of humanity according to the will of God!

6 Mark 31

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On his return to the sea of Galilee Jesus recommenced his work of healing, seating himself for that purpose on one of the hills. 'And he went up into the mountain, and sat there.' After his long absence large crowds waited on him, and relying on his powers of healing they brought a number of persons afflicted in various ways, and laid them down before him. 'And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet.' All these sufferers were healed by him, and as cure after cure was effected the beholders were astounded; the row of impotent invalids kept on diminishing, one after another being enabled to exercise his long-lost bodily function: the lame man leaped, blind eyes sparkled with the joy of recovered sight, the dumb found themselves able to express their thankfulness, deformed and palsied limbs became sound and vigorous. 'And he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing.' Alford explains: 'The *maimed* are properly persons maimed in the hands. The word is also sometimes used of the feet. The meaning need not be, that a wanting member was supplied to these persons; but that a debility, such as that arising from paralysis or wound, was healed.'

Mark says nothing of these multitudinous cures, but he gives the particulars of the recovery of a man who was deaf and dumb. Matthew having been an eye-witness could report generally what he had seen. Mark being simply a compiler could refer only to such cases as had been selected and preserved for special record. It may fairly be assumed that if he had been aware of this group of miracles, he would have alluded to them in general terms, as he did on a previous occasion. Although this miracle may have occurred about the same period, it does not appear to have been one of three mentioned by Matthew, for Mark represents it as the result of a special application to Jesus. 'And they bring unto him, one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him.' Young renders, 'a deaf, stuttering man: wholly deaf, but only partially dumb. Jesus took the man apart from the crowd. 'And he took him aside from the multitude privately.' Probably Jesus deemed this privacy necessary to the effecting of a cure. It was not an easy matter to put himself into communication with the deaf mute, however essential it might be to make him conscious of what was intended, and to excite his confidence and faith in Jesus. As the readiest means to that end, he placed his fingers into his ears, which would indicate the object he had in view with respect to the deafness, and he brought his tongue into action by spitting, thus indicating that an effort with the tongue was required. 'And he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue.' Whose tongue did Jesus touch: his own, or the dumb man's? Not the latter, for nothing had been done to induce the man to put it forth. It seems that Jesus brought his own tongue into exercise by the act of spitting and otherwise. Probably his fingers were placed in the deaf ears, not in his own: we know how constantly Jesus used personal contact in working his cures. Still making his object manifest by dumb show, Jesus looked heavenward, thereby intimating that something was to be sought

which no earthly power could give : and to show that this related to the man's distressing infirmity, he gave a sigh, which could be seen and understood though not heard. 'And looking up to heaven, he sighed.' Having thus excited in the deaf mute desire, hope, faith, Jesus moved his lips in speech to him. It was but to utter one word : 'and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.' That one word was enough : it pierced into the deaf ears, its meaning reached the listener's mind, the power of speech was simultaneously restored, the painful stuttering disappeared, and the man was enabled to speak distinctly. 'And his ears were opened, and the band of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.'

Having performed this miracle, Jesus imposed silence upon those who witnessed it. 'And he charged them that they should tell no man.' Two reasons may be imagined for this prohibition. As it had been necessary to perform the miracle in private, Jesus may have deemed it equally necessary to avoid exposing the man's newly recovered faculties to the strain and excitement which would arise from the tumultuous questionings and congratulations of a crowd. It would be much better for him to go quietly away, and that he should be allowed, for a time at least, to mix with men without attracting attention. Or it is possible that this miracle may have been wrought in the course of the tour undertaken by Jesus through the Gentile countries. As he drew near to the end of it, approaching towards the sea of Galilee, it would be impossible to preserve his incognito ; many would recognise him, and he would find himself surrounded by a multitude, even if he abstained from addressing them. And as he neared his journey's end, on the eve of recommencing his labours among his own countrymen, there would be no such imperative necessity for refusing his aid to strangers as existed on first starting. Some entreaty would seem to have been necessary to induce Jesus to perform this miracle, for Mark's words, 'they beseech him to lay his hand upon him,' denote importunity. Jesus yielded to the request, but he performed the miracle in private, and desired that silence should be kept with respect to it. It must be regarded as an exceptional boon, a counterpart to that bestowed upon the Syro-Phœnician woman previously, another 'crumb' granted to those who were not within the scope of his ministrations.

Whatever the reason of the prohibition, and however earnestly enforced, it was found impossible to get it acted upon. In the enthusiasm of the moment, the widest publicity was given to the miracle. 'And he charged them that they should tell no man : but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it.' This rendering, especially the expression, 'so much the more a great deal,' makes it appear as if the beholders of the miracles deliberately set themselves to disobey to the utmost extent possible the injunction of Jesus. Young's translation gives a different turn to the passage : 'But the more he (as much as he—Englishman's Greek New Testament) was charging them, the more abundantly they were proclaiming *it*.' While Jesus was begging that an entire silence might be kept, the news had already leaked out of doors, and was being promulgated far and wide in fullest detail. Unbounded astonishment was expressed at the marvellousness and perfectness of the cure. 'And they were beyond measure astonished,

saying, He hath done all things well : he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.' This was the language of simple wonderment, whereas Matthew represents the multitude who witnessed the series of miracles performed on the mountain by the sea of Galilee, as giving expression to their feelings under a sense of religious awe. 'And they glorified the God of Israel.'

15 Mat. 31

Mark now mentions the fact, described also by Matthew, of the great crowds who waited upon Jesus on his return to the sea of Galilee. The two narratives now again run side by side. The people, in their enthusiastic desire to see and hear Jesus, clung about him day after day, and at last the fact forced itself upon his attention that their supply of food was exhausted. 'In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat.' The account involves more than the mere utterance of the remark, for Jesus assembled his disciples for the express purpose of laying the matter before them. Matthew is in exact agreement : 'and called unto him his disciples, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat.' Matthew continues : 'and I would not send them away fasting, lest haply they faint in the way.' For the 'I will not' in the Authorised Version the Revisers have 'I would not,' expressing simply his unwillingness. Young is to the same effect : 'to let them away fasting I wish not.' The Revisers have introduced the word 'haply' after 'lest,' thereby representing a mere possibility, instead of a probability if not a certainty. There is no such weakening of the passage by Tischendorf, Young, Alford or Sharpe. Mark represents Jesus as expressing the conviction that the catastrophe he dreaded would be sure to happen : 'and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way.' It was within his knowledge that several among the crowd had come from long distances : 'and some of them are come from far.' The Authorised Version stands : 'for divers of them came from far,' which looks rather like an explanation of the evangelist than as if spoken by Jesus. Young anticipated the Revisers by putting 'are come' for 'came.' The word 'for' has been replaced by 'and,' in accordance with the two oldest MSS. The situation was a very grave one. By no fault on the part of Jesus he found himself, equally with the crowd, in a critical position. Accustomed to move with his disciples from place to place, the supply of food provided for his own party was doubtless sufficient ; but the crowd surrounding him had been more intent upon watching and hearing him than anxious about their provisions. As on a former occasion, their indiscretion in that matter threatened serious consequences, and entailed upon Jesus a heavy responsibility. If the disaster to be apprehended should actually happen, what reproaches and accusations might be launched against Jesus and his disciples by their enemies ! It would avail little to say that the crowd could not have been prevailed upon to depart sooner : any calamity resulting from the method of evangelisation adopted by Jesus would have been laid to his charge, and further prejudice excited against his cause and conduct. Apart from which, any death or illness from starvation would be a terrible thing to contemplate,

8 Mark 1, 2

15 Mat. 32

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8 Mark 3

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- irrespective of the question as to responsibility in connection with it. In the emergency, Jesus called together his disciples and laid the case before them. All they could say was, that there was no possibility of purchasing in that uninhabited neighbourhood a sufficient quantity of food for such a crowd. It was beyond their power to do anything. 'And the disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so many loaves in a desert place, as to fill so great a multitude?' 15 Mat. 33
- 'And his disciples answered him, Whence shall we be able to fill these men with bread (Gr. loaves) here in a desert place?' Doubtless they had been free from all anxiety on the matter, remembering what had taken place previously on a similar occasion. Then they had anticipated the need, and proposed taking steps to remedy it in due time, only to be assured that the precaution was needless, and to witness the bestowment of a miraculous supply. The present necessity, and the mention of the matter now by Jesus, seemed to point to a repetition of the miracle. As before, he desired the disciples to ascertain what amount of provisions they had themselves. 8 Mark 4
- 'And he asked them, How many loaves have ye?' They told him, 'And they said Seven.' Matthew, who was doubtless an eye-witness, adds that they had also a few fishes. 15 Mat. 34
- 'And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few small fishes.' Thereupon Jesus desired all the crowd to seat themselves upon the ground. Those who had witnessed his previous feeding of a multitude, or who had heard about it, must have anticipated what was to follow. They now saw him take the food into his own hands. 8 Mark 6
- 'And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves.' Matthew at this point uses precisely the same words, but adds: 'and the fishes.' Jesus, either holding the food or standing by it, gave thanks, which seems to have been equivalent to our custom of 'saying grace.' He then broke the loaves, and handed them to his disciples, who distributed them among the crowd. 15 Mat. 35
- 'And he gave thanks and brake, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes.' 'And having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.' Mark has alluded only to loaves; now he mentions the fishes, and describes the taking of them, giving thanks over them, and distribution of them, as distinct from what was done with the loaves. 8 Mark 6
- 'And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them.' We must accept the fuller account of Mark as accurate, regarding that of Matthew as simply more condensed: there is no actual contradiction between them. The expression in verse 7, 'having blessed them,' differs from that in verse 6, 'having given thanks.' The Authorised Version in verse 7 has simply 'blessed;' Alford suggested the insertion of 'them.' Tischendorf notes that the word 'them' appears only in the Vatican MS. He and Young omit 'them,' and Luther has in both verses simply 'dankte,' 'give thanks.' The Greek verbs are *eucharistō* and *eulogeō*, from which are derived in English *eucharist* and *eulogy*. The terms are equivalent, indicating a common Jewish custom: there was no blessing of the fishes by Jesus, in the sense in which Romish priests and others 'bless' the 'holy water' and such things. 8
- 'And they did eat, and were filled.' 'And they did all eat, and



were filled.' The simple words of the evangelists carry an astounding meaning. The seven loaves and few fishes were enough for the enormous, hungry crowd. There is a dignified gravity about the narratives which forbids any idea of deception or mistake. The writers knew well that they were relating that which was incomprehensible, and which only actual observation or undoubted evidence could render credible. They simply relate the mysterious phenomenon as it happened before men's eyes, adding no comment and attempting no explanation. They bring out the fact that, as on the former occasion, Jesus began by taking into his own hands the food which was the subject of such marvellous increase. We are bound to believe that he had good reason for so doing. We have become familiar with the fact that a special virtue and power emanated from his touch. Through his fingers laid upon blind eyes or placed in deaf ears, sight and hearing were restored ; by the laying on of his hands lepers were cleansed, fevers were dissipated, all kinds of sickness and infirmity were cured ; through his very clothes healing virtue had flowed. Now, in some mysterious way, his holding of the food imparted thereto a subtle germ of rapid increase and development, so that the particles of matter composing the loaves and fishes instantaneously grew in bulk, not by mere expansion and attenuation, but by amplification of the solid bread and flesh, so that the little became much, and the much still more, and the increase went on until enough had been provided for all present. If we ask, Whence came this overwhelming supply of food ? the answer must needs be, Out of those elements in earth and air from which all things at all times are made : only on this occasion there was brought into operation some occult law of development with which mankind are not familiar, which is not included in our category of natural laws, but which, no more and no less than them, it is beyond our power either to doubt or comprehend. We see how the oak springs from the acorn, and we marvel not : in the course of a century from the first minute germ of vitality, the magnificent tree has developed itself out of the apparent nothingness surrounding it ; its solid structure, its leaves, its fruit, are the invisible elements transmuted into the visible, the immaterial transformed into the material. Consider the sudden upgrowth of a mushroom. You will find it in the early morning where there was no indication of it the night before. Note the rapidity with which the yeast plant propagates itself. Laws of development, marvellous, incomprehensible, surround us on every side : protean changes of all kinds, sometimes slow, sometimes sudden, some things growing into things wholly unlike themselves, other things reproducing themselves in ceaseless sequence. Everything about us is full of marvel and of mystery, in the midst of which we are certain that every effect has its cause, which in some cases is discernible and in others eludes the closest scientific scrutiny. Some living, vitalizing principle underlies all these changes, and it needs but to be applied, infused, directed, to work greater things than these, be it even to impart to bread and flesh the power of spontaneous reproduction. Who shall limit the workings of Divine power and wisdom ? ' If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' ' Verily, I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' As human reason cannot fathom the

mysteries of life and growth, so neither should it presume to limit them. The critic who denies the possibility of any miracle because he has never witnessed one, is no wiser than that Eastern king who accepted all the information given by a traveller, until he told of the conversion of liquid into solid, and how the water became hard and rigid, so that men and horses and wagons could move about upon it. 'Now I know you lie,' was, in effect, the answer of the monarch. The career of Jesus began, continued and ended in miracles. In all the mighty works he did, he was continually bringing into operation recondite laws, influencing spirit and matter, of which none but himself knew the secret. To some extent, he was able to impart to others his wonderful powers of healing, he bade his disciples go forth and exercise them, sought to give them confidence in themselves, saying, 'Freely ye received, freely give;' only, it would seem, to find in them an imperfection of faith which marred and hindered the gifts he would have had them exhibit. Only on grave necessity did he show, on two occasions, what could be done in the way of providing food. That was a startling revelation of the infinite possibilities lying within the power of One who could call into operation occult laws, and rely on them to bring about the results decreed by his will. The marvel is no whit diminished or explained by attributing it to Divine power. All power is divine; for Divinity is but another word for Rulership, be it over men or angels or the matter in the universe.

10 Mat. 8

The number of persons who partook of the miraculous supply of food is thus stated by Mark: 'And they were about four thousand.' That is the reading of the Vatican MS. The Sinaitic reads, 'And they were four thousand.' The Authorised Version stands: 'And they were four thousand.' Matthew records as follows: 'And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.' The Sinaitic MS. reads, 'children and women.'

8 Mark 9

15 Mat. 38

8 Mark 9

After performing the miracle, Jesus dismissed the crowd. 'And he sent them away.' The expression indicates that some exercise of persuasion or authority was needed. On the former occasion, when the five thousand were fed, there would seem to have been greater difficulty in inducing the multitude to depart, Jesus having had to send his disciples away first by boat, and remain himself to accomplish the task. Now there was not, as before, any idea of setting up Jesus as a popular ruler, and the crowd had already been with him three days, not one day only as then. He now entered into the boat with his disciples, and accompanied them to Dalmanutha, which is marked in the maps as on the other side of the lake. 'And straightway he entered into the boat with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.' Matthew names the place differently. 'And he sent away the multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came into the borders of Magadan.' In the Authorised Version this stands: 'took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.' All MSS. read 'took the ship;' the definite article seems to indicate that the disciples had their own boat on the lake. The alteration of Magdala into Magadan is in accordance with the two oldest MSS. There he was again assailed by the Pharisees. They urged him to show them a sign from heaven, as the best method of demonstrating the character and authority of his mission. 'And the Pharisees came

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15 Mat. 39

8 Mark 11

forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.' Matthew joins with them the Sadducees. 'And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and tempting him asked him to shew them a sign from heaven.' Alford has the following note : 'In the Jewish superstition it was held that demons and false gods could give signs *on earth*, but only the true God signs *from heaven*. In the apocryphal Epistle of Jeremiah, ver. 67, we read of the gods of the heathen, "Neither can they shew signs in the heaven among the heathen . ." And for such a notion they alleged the bread from heaven given by Moses (see John vi. 31), the staying of the sun by Joshua, the thunder and rain by Samuel.'

16 Mat. 1

Mark prefaces the reply of Jesus with the words, 'And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith . . .' The expression 'in his spirit' is peculiar ; it probably denotes that the mingled feelings of astonishment and sorrow excited in the breast of Jesus by the demand, found vent in a long-drawn sigh. What could be the reason for their making so unprecedented a request ? 'Why doth this generation seek a sign ?' Former prophets and teachers had not been challenged to produce such testimony in their favour, and the whole public career of Jesus had been one continued course of miracles. Surely they had eyes to see, powers of observation, and a judgment they could exercise. 'But he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather : for the heaven is red.* And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day : for the heaven is red and lowring.*' Their professed inability to form a judgment with respect to the teaching of Jesus, unless he certified it by a sign, was simply a piece of hypocrisy. They were as well able to interpret the events of their own times as to forecast the weather. The Authorised Version has, 'O ye hypocrites,' which is omitted by the Revisers, Tischendorf and others. The Revised Version continues : 'Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven ; but ye cannot *discern* the signs of the times.' In the Authorised Version the latter sentence is put as a question : 'Can ye not ?' Young, instead of a note of interrogation has a note of exclamation. In the two oldest MSS. the whole of the passage in verses 2 and 3 after the words 'unto them' is omitted.

8 Mark 11

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16 Mat. 2, 3

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4

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8 Mark 12

Matthew represents Jesus as answering his own question, 'Why doth this generation seek a sign ?' as recorded by Mark, by saying, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.' There was a wide-spread disregard of the primary laws of goodness and morality. Human duties were neglected, and the obligations of virtue deliberately scorned. And the very men who were thus trampling under foot the divine law, demanded for the satisfaction of their doubts a special sign from heaven ! Their impious wish would not be gratified. No such sign could be granted, although there would be one of a different kind. 'And there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah.' He was thrown into the deep, swallowed by a whale, and after three days appeared again upon the earth. A similar marvel would be witnessed by the generation then living. These words of Jesus must have seemed very enigmatical. Mark does not record them ; his account stands simply : 'Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.' Here, as often elsewhere, Matthew's account is fuller.

Jesus was not disposed for any longer discussion or intercourse



16 Mat. 4

8 Mark 13

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16 Mat. 5

8 Mark 14

16 Mat. 6

8 Mark 15

16 Mat. 7

8 Mark 16

16 Mat. 8 10

with his questioners: 'And he left them, and departed.' Not from their presence only, but from their neighbourhood: he preferred to return to the other side of the lake. 'And he left them, and again entering into *the boat* departed to the other side.' The Revisers have italicised the words 'the boat,' although in the Authorised Version the corresponding words 'the ship' were not so marked as an insertion. The reason for this seems to be that the Sinaitic MS. omits 'into the ship.' Tischendorf renders, 'And he left them, and embarked again.' The departure was so sudden and hurried, that the disciples forgot to provide themselves with a supply of food. 'And they forgot to take bread.' 'And the disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread (Gr. loaves).' Mark adds: 'And they had not in the boat with them more than one loaf.' The mind of Jesus was still running on the intellectual and moral perversity of the Pharisees and of others in authority, and he sought to turn the thoughts of his disciples to the evils and dangers resulting from the principles and conduct of such men. 'And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' Mark states that he included in his warning the king himself. 'And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.' By leaven he probably meant some faults of disposition, some wrongfulness in will and action which, uneradicated and unchecked, penetrated and assimilated the whole character, perverted the judgment, deteriorated the motives, and turned the influence and authority attaching to their high position into the narrow channels of selfishness, prejudice, tyranny, persecution. Conspicuous faults are conspicuous warnings: the evils apparent in a class are calls to individual watchfulness and self-examination. The disciples imagined no such meaning. It is not stated, neither is it implied, that the fact of a want of bread had been mentioned to or in presence of Jesus. But no sooner did he drop the word 'leaven,' than they began to discuss among themselves whether his warning did not refer to the circumstance of their having no loaves. 'And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread (Gr. loaves).' 'And they reasoned one with another, saying, We have no bread.' Young renders, 'Because we took no loaves;' 'Because we have no loaves.' The Revisers have banished 'because' to the margin, and have inserted '(or, loaves)' in the margin of Matthew, but have omitted to do so in that of Mark. It seems as if the disciples inclined to the opinion that Jesus desired to put them on their guard against purchasing loaves which might have been tampered with by their avowed enemies, by the admixture of some noxious drug in the process of manufacture. When Jesus became aware of the discussion among his disciples, he rebuked them on two grounds: their want of faith, and their dulness of apprehension. If he had discerned any ground for such a suspicion, could they suppose that he who had fed the multitudes would not rather supply them miraculously than let them be exposed to any risk of poison? Could they not perceive a meaning in his words apart from any assumption of that kind? Had they lost both memory and understanding? 'And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves because ye have no bread (Gr. loaves)? Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five



thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?' Mark reports this as uttered still more emphatically and vividly: 'And Jesus perceiving it saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among the four thousand, how many basketfuls of broken pieces took ye up? And they say unto him, Seven.'

<sup>s</sup> Mark 17-20

To account for the differences between the evangelists, here and elsewhere, the authors of 'The Common tradition of the Synoptic Gospels' assume the existence of 'Original Memoirs,' more or less obscure owing to their brevity, and requiring expansion to make them intelligible, dialogues being 'sometimes written down without the insertion of words defining the speaker in each case, because the context may be supposed to render such definition needless, and because paragraphs, inverted commas, and other punctuation (devices unknown to the earliest Greek MSS.) help to elucidate the meaning.' The Authors of 'The Common Tradition' suppose that the Memoirs of the Apostles contained some note of this kind arranged in the short lines which are found in the earlier and Greek MSS.:

Do ye not yet perceive  
neither remember the five  
loaves of the five thousand  
how many baskets full of  
fragments took ye up the  
seven loaves for the four thou-  
sand how many baskets of frag-  
ments took ye up do ye not  
yet perceive

This might be variously interpreted thus :

(1)

Do ye not yet perceive neither remember? The five loaves for the five thousand? How many baskets took ye up.\* The seven for the four thousand? How many baskets took ye up? Do ye not yet perceive?

(2)

Do ye not yet perceive neither remember the five loaves for the five thousand (and) how many baskets ye took up, (neither) the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many baskets ye took up? \* How is it that ye do not perceive?

In this instance 'Matthew and Mark reverse their treatment of the Tradition; and what Matthew expresses in a continuous speech, Mark breaks up into a rapid dialogue.'

'The former of the (above) two interpretations naturally passes into another stage when the abrupt questions are amplified so as to be more in conformity with grammar, and when answers are inserted in reply to the questions; and thus we have the actual versions of Mark and Matthew :

\* The Greek for the verb is the same, whether predicatively or interrogatively used.

Mark viii. 17—21

Do ye not yet perceive neither . . . remember? (*When I brake*) the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? (*They say to him, Twelve.* When) the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took ye up? (*They say to him, Seven.* And he said to them) Do ye not yet understand?

Matthew xvi. 9—11.

Do ye not yet perceive neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up, neither the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand (*that I spake it not to you concerning bread?*)

This is one out of many similar examples given in the Introduction to 'The Common Tradition,' by way of harmonising the differences between the evangelists.

8 Mark 21

16 Mat. 11

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The miracles, if remembered, sufficed to prove that no thought of yeast and bread-making could have been in the mind of Jesus when he spoke to them about 'heaven:' and as little had he thought that they, now so long accustomed to his method of teaching by similes could have so misinterpreted his words. 'And he said unto them. Do ye not yet understand?' This observation of Jesus is given more fully by Matthew: 'How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake it not to you concerning bread (Gr. loaves)? But beware of the heaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' The metaphor was a most expressive one; now, at last, its meaning dawned upon the apostles. 'Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the heaven of bread (Gr. loaves), but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' Even this interpretation of theirs does not contain the full sense. Surely the 'heaven' represented conduct as well as 'teaching.' Herod was no preacher of doctrines, but his name was included in the warning with respect to 'heaven.' Alford remarks: 'Possibly this was a conclusion drawn in the mind of the narrator, not altogether identical with that to be drawn from our account here—for the *heaven of Herod* could not be *doctrine*.'

The Revisers note that both in Matthew and Mark the word 'basket' in two verses represents different Greek words. Alford, arguing against the idea of modern German interpreters who assume the identity of the two miracles, observes: 'There is one small token of authenticity which marks these two accounts as referring to two distinct events . . . It is, that whereas the baskets in which the fragments were collected on the other occasion are called by all four evangelists *rophini*, those used for that purpose after this miracle are in both Matthew and Mark *spyrides*. And when our Lord refers to the two miracles, the same distinction is observed; a particularity which could not have arisen except as pointing to a matter of fact, that, whatever the distinction be, which is uncertain, different kinds of baskets were used on the two occasions.'

8 Mark 22

From the boat, Jesus and his disciples landed at Bethsaida. 'And they came unto Bethsaida.' The Authorised Version has, 'And he cometh to Bethsaida,' which is now altered according to the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., the former having been amended by a later hand. The place is supposed to have been Bethsaida Julias on the North

East side of the lake. 'And they bring to him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him.' From the fact that this one person only is mentioned as being brought, and that entreaty was used to induce Jesus to cure him, it may be inferred that Jesus was now abstaining from any working of miracles in public. He appears to have been averse from doing anything which might attract attention, for he began by taking the blind man by the hand and leading him to the outskirts of the village. 'And he took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village.' The Revisers have altered 'town' into 'village,' which agrees with Young's rendering. Then Jesus proceeded to effect the cure, and that not by a mere touch, but after a manner which was not to be anticipated. He placed both his hands upon the blind man, first having spat 'into' (Young and Tischendorf) his eyes. Is it not most reasonable to infer, from the act itself, that such an act was needed? Those who witnessed the miracles of Jesus were led to assume a connection between the touch and the cure, so that the latter was not expected apart from the former. By what authority do we arrive at a different conclusion? Dean Alford might have been challenged in vain to justify his assertion: 'These things were *in the Lord's power*, and He ordered them as He pleased from present circumstances, or for our instruction.' On the contrary, we are told that the first laying on of the hands of Jesus was not in this case sufficient, and Jesus himself appeared to be uncertain as to what effect had been produced by it. 'And when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou aught?' Then the blind man turned his eyes upward, and replied that he was just able to distinguish men from trees by the movements of the former. 'And he looked up, and said, I see men; for I behold *them* as trees, walking.' Thereupon Jesus deemed it necessary to repeat the touch, and upon the eyes themselves. 'Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes.' The Authorised Version adds, 'and made him look up,' which is omitted by the Revisers, not being in the two oldest MSS. The second touch completed the cure. 'And he looked steadfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly.' The Authorised Version, instead of 'all things' has 'every man.' Tischendorf renders, 'and he saw clearly and was restored, and saw all things distinctly,' following the two oldest MSS.

The restored man not being an inhabitant of Bethsaida, Jesus bade him return to his home direct, without re-entering the village, which would have frustrated the object Jesus had in view in leading him out of it. 'And he sent him away to his home, saying, Do not even enter into the village.' In the Sinaitic MS. the word 'even' was inserted by a later hand. The addition in the Authorised Version, 'nor tell it to any in the town' is omitted, on the authority of the two oldest MSS.

The anxiety of Jesus to prevent the knowledge of the miracle spreading, may have arisen from his being on the eve of travelling further north, the next verse intimating that he went to the villages of Cæsarea Philippi. Restricting his ministrations as far as possible to his own countrymen, it was not desirable that the fame of his miracles should precede him when he was on the confines of purely Gentile countries.

Returning from their northern journey, Jesus and his apostles came to Capernaum. 'And they came to Capernaum.' There a remarkable circumstance occurred, which is narrated only by one of the evangelists, and which has perplexed alike readers and commentators. The collectors of a particular tax called upon Peter, and enquired of him whether Jesus would pay the tax for himself. 'And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received the half-shekel (Gr. didrachma) came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master (or, teacher) pay the half-shekel (Gr. didrachma)?' The half-shekel is nominally equivalent to about a shilling of English money, and would represent an actual value of about ten shillings. The tax of half a shekel is stated (30 Ex. 12, 13) as due from every Israelite, as 'the ransom for his soul unto the Lord,' when the census was taken. Alford says: 'This was a sum paid annually by the Jews of twenty years old and upwards, *towards the temple* in Jerusalem:' in proof of which he adds: 'Josephus says of Vespasian. "He levied a tribute on the Jews all over the world, compelling each man to pay two drachmas yearly into the Capitol, as they formerly used to do to the temple at Jerusalem."' The form of the question and the reply of Jesus indicate that the payment of the tax was optional; but certain persons were appointed to receive it, and they would naturally be anxious to collect as much as possible. Peter had taken upon himself to answer for the payment of the tax by Jesus, replying to the question in the affirmative: 'He saith, Yea.' Probably he intended to communicate the fact to Jesus, but Jesus, immediately on their meeting, anticipated him by putting a question which showed that the subject was already within his cognizance.

'And when he came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers?' The evangelist either could not or did not care to tell us whether this knowledge on the part of Jesus was, or was not, supernatural. Probably sufficient time had elapsed to allow of the mention by the tax-collector of the answer given by Peter, and the news might in a very natural way have reached the ears of Jesus. We must not venture to assume a miracle except on clearest evidence, and we do not know whether, in the opinion of the evangelist, Jesus owed his knowledge in this instance to intuition or to ordinary means of information. Alford explains that the word '*tribute*' is here the rendering of census, money taken according to the reckoning of the census,—a capitation tax.' Tischendorf and Young render 'toll or tribute' by 'custom or tribute,' and Samuel Sharpe by 'tax or Census.' The word 'children' in the Authorised Version now stands 'sons.' The Revisers have made a similar alteration in the following passages: 'That ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.' 'But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness.' 'Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn?' 'The good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one.' 'Ye shall be sons of the most high.' 'The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.' 'The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage.' It is obvious from these quotations that the expression 'sons' had a recognised and broad meaning, not restricted to the sense of parental relation-

9 Mark 33

17 Mat. 24

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5 Mat. 15

8 Mat. 12

9 Mat. 15

13 Mat. 38

6 Luke 35

16 Luke 8

20 Luke 24



ship merely. In two of the passages the term is applied to men in their relationship to God : ' sons of your Father which is in heaven ; sons of the Most High ; ' ' sons of the kingdom ' are alluded to ; ' sons of the bride-chamber ; ' ' sons of the evil *one* ; ' ' sons of the light ; ' and in one instance the term is applied to females who ' are given in marriage.' In one case it seems to indicate disciples : ' By whom do your sons cast them out ? ' 11 Luke 19

Young does not adopt the word ' strangers.' His rendering is as follows : ' The kings of the earth—from whom do they receive custom or tribute ? from their own sons or from the others ? Peter saith to him, From the others. Jesus said to him, Then are the sons free.' The distinction appears to be between those who were and those who were not ' sons of the kingdom,' between born subjects and aliens. The payment of a census or capitation-tax was a badge of subjection, an admission of inferiority, foreigners only being subject to it. There is no ground for the idea that a distinction is intended to be drawn between the taxation of a king's subjects and the non-taxation of the royal family. But the interpretation given by Alford is as follows : ' The whole force of this argument depends on the fact of the payment being a *divine* one. It rests on this : If the *sons* are *free*, then on *Me*, being the *Son of God*, has this tax no claim.' The illustration of Jesus did not touch upon any question of his own divinity : from the admission that a purely secular census-tax was imposed only upon aliens, he drew the corollary that those standing in the relation of loyal subjects to the monarch were free from such taxation. ' And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are free.' 17 Mat. 26 The inference was general, not particular. But it bore in a very startling way on the half-shekel tax. That was a ransom tax ; a payment demanded as a satisfaction for sparing the giver's life : ' And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to those that are numbered of them, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth over unto them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary . . . The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when they give the offering of the Lord, to make atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money from the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting ; that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord, to make atonement for your souls.' 30 Ex. 11-16 Therefore, adopting Dean Alford's statement of the fact that the half-shekel tax was applied towards the temple in Jerusalem, it was nevertheless a kind of blood money, an atonement for the soul, that is, a payment rendered for the redemption of the donor's life. The whole teaching of Jesus was antagonistic to such an idea. Proclaiming ' the kingdom of God,' the ' sons of the kingdom ' could not need thus to purchase for themselves immunity from the infliction of death at the hands of God. Any support given to the temple must now be in some other way of voluntary donation, irrespective of the old half-shekel tax. From that, the ' sons ' of God were ' free.' Had Jesus been consulted, it is evident that he would not have consented to pay the tax, regarding it as neither obligatory nor applicable to

17 Mat. 27

the new order of things he came to establish. But after the hasty, inconsiderate assent which Peter had presumed to give in his Master's name, it would have caused dispute and scandal to refuse the payment. Jesus met the difficulty in his own way, truly a marvellous and inexplicable way. No half shekel tax must be provided either by him or his apostle; but to meet the emergency, the money which must not be paid out of the purse of Jesus should come out of the mouth of a fish. 'But, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel (Gr. stater): that take, and give unto them for me and thee.' On the words 'me and thee' Alford observes: 'not *us*; as in John xx. 17: because the footing on which it was given was *different*.' Neither of the passages, in their plain, grammatical meaning, indicates any such distinction; nor would commentators ever have imagined it, apart from preconceived ideas respecting Jesus. The expression 'give this for me and thee' must surely be equivalent to 'give this for us,' except that the former may be taken to intimate that the amount was due separately and not jointly.

Alford remarks: 'Of course the miracle is to be understood in its literal, historic sense. The *rationalistic* interpretation, that the fish was to be sold for the money (and a wonderful price it would be for a fish caught with a hook), is refuted by the terms of the narrative,—and the *mythical* one, besides the utter inapplicability of all mythical interpretation to any part of the evangelic history,—by the absence of all possible occasion, and all possible significancy, of such a myth.' The circumstance is so puzzling and incomprehensible, that the mind naturally seeks for any plausible explanation which might seem to make it less marvellous and bewildering. But the boldest course is the surest. The account must either be rejected as an invention of the first narrator, or accepted as an actual occurrence in spite of the mystery surrounding it. The evangelist has attempted no solution, and ventured upon no comment. He gives the bare fact, leaving with his readers the responsibility of dealing with it. The phenomena lie altogether outside the range of our experience. How did the coin come into the mouth of the fish? How came it to pass that that very fish should be the one first hooked by Peter? How did it happen that the coin was of precisely the value of two half-shekels? Alford says simply that it was 'furnished by God's special providence.' That common form of expression is deemed sufficient to account for anything, but it supplies not the least elucidation of the matter. We stand wondering at the marvel which followed upon the word of Jesus: how does that marvel become one whit the less, or assume greater credibility, because we choose to say 'it was God's doing'? Our faith is not great enough to conceive it possible that the mere volition of Jesus wrought the miracle; so we fall back upon our conception of the Divine Being, whom we have been taught to believe omnipotent, to have 'made all things out of nothing,' who 'spake and it was done.' Jesus stands before us in human form; he does many mighty works; he heals diseases, controls demons, walks upon the sea, hushes the storm, multiplies the loaves. Be he who he may, he is obviously the doer of these things; they are effected by his will and agency. But the tester in the fish's mouth, and the leading of

the fish to Peter's hook, that we deem too hard a thing for Jesus to accomplish. It seems easier, safer, more rational, to attribute it to the secret influence of 'the invisible God,' 'whom no man hath seen nor can see.' But did not the apostle Paul insist upon the fact that Jesus 'is the image of the invisible God,' . . . that 'all things have been created through him'? Did not the apostle John write that 'all things were made through him'? Did not Jesus himself solemnly foretell that his own incomprehensible powers and attributes would be participated in by others having confidence in him? 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.' Attributing all power to God, Jesus wielded before the eyes of men his own gifts of God-like influence, and taught that similar, equal, even superior powers lay within the reach of others of the human family. Until we can believe that Jesus really possessed such powers, the first step has not been taken by us towards that faith which will place us on his level. That faith in Jesus, and that hope of participation in his gifts, are the very essence of his teaching. His 'gospel' and his works must be read anew, with other eyes than those furnished by inherited theological ideas. The full light of his glorious gospel has been obscured from the very first; its faintest glimmer, God be thanked, has been sufficient for men to live and die by; but how much reason have we still to offer up the apostolic prayer: 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ.' Let us be consistent in our conclusions. That power of volition in Jesus which enabled him to still the tempest, which upbore him on the water, which gave increase to the substance of the loaves and fishes, must have moulded, in some inscrutable way, the particles of matter which composed the tester, and impressed upon the coin the image which was in his mind's eye. It was another exemplification of that subtle, incomprehensible influence of mind over matter which Jesus alone among mankind was able to exercise, and of the possibility and actuality of which he sought, on various occasions and in plainest terms, to convince his apostles.

At that time there arose a question among the apostles as to precedence. In the intercourse of twelve men, living, probably, out of a common fund, and in constant attendance upon one Teacher, occasions would naturally arise for some clashing of opinion or interest, and the necessity would be felt of fixing upon some one of them whose decision in every matter should be binding upon all. 'And there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest (Gr. greater).' Mark informs us that the question had been discussed while they were on their journey, that there had been difference of opinion, actual dispute, among them with respect to it, that when they came indoors Jesus asked them what had been the



subject of discussion, and that they hesitated about giving him an answer. 'And when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning in the way?' The Revisers, on the authority of the two oldest MSS., have omitted the words 'among yourselves.' 'But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another in the way, who *was* the greatest (Gr. greater).' Matthew's account differs from this. He makes no mention of a dispute on the road, he gives no intimation of any enquiry being made by Jesus, nor of any reticence on the part of the apostles. On the contrary, he represents them as coming to Jesus for the purpose of obtaining his opinion on the subject, and he states the question to have had reference to 'the kingdom of heaven.' 'In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest (Gr. greater) in the kingdom of heaven?' Having no cut and dried theory of 'inspiration' standing in our way, we need not scruple to admit any apparent discrepancy between the evangelists, or shrink, if necessary, from the admission that an error has been made by one of them. At first sight, it looks so; but a closer consideration of the narratives shows how easily and naturally they might be reconciled. By throwing in the word 'then,' 'Who then is greatest?' Matthew clearly indicates that the question followed upon some prior conversation. From Mark we learn that when they were 'in the house' Jesus first alluded to the subject, and then the apostles gave no reply to his question. Not until he sat down and called them, was the matter again mentioned. By that time the apostles had had opportunity for reflection; probably it was felt that the question of precedence extended beyond the present, and would of necessity have to be settled under that system of heavenly rule which Jesus had come to establish. Responding now to his request for an explanation, they put the question to him in the manner and form recorded by Matthew: 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Rendered by Young: 'Who, then, is greatest in the reign of the heavens?' Luke intimates that the remarks of Jesus were not made until he had become aware, in some way, of the import of the discussion: 'But when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart . . .'

The question which had been raised was treated by Jesus in a very serious and thorough manner. He began by assuring the disciples that the only possible pre-eminence was that of self-effacement and self-sacrifice: he who would be foremost must choose the very lowest place, and devote himself to the general welfare. 'And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all.' Anxious to make the deepest impression possible, Jesus called to a little child to come to him (doubtless he was on friendly terms with children everywhere he went), and when the boy approached, he took him up and placed him beside himself, the disciples forming a group around. 'And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them.' 'He took a little child, and set him by his side.' Mark adds yet another touch to the picture. 'And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them: and taking him in his arms, he said unto them . . .' One portion of his discourse is recorded by all three of the evangelists, but that was preceded by some remarks which have been handed down by Matthew only. 'And said, verily I say unto you, Except ye



turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The Authorised Version has, 'Except ye be converted,' which last word Alford notes is literally 'turned,' adding: 'The word also conveys the idea of *turning back* from the course previously begun,' which he understood to be 'that of ambitious rivalry.' But Jesus did not allude to any change of character, nor to any turning back from 'ambitious rivalry.' Take the account simply as it stands: Jesus called out to a little child, who heard his voice, saw his inviting gesture, turned, and came towards him. That is the way, explained Jesus, in which men must enter into the kingdom of heaven. Young renders: 'And Jesus having called up a child, set him in their midst, and said, Verily I say unto you, if ye may not be turned and become as the children, ye may not enter into the reign of the heavens.' The child was held out as their example: but the child had not been turned back from any course of evil or of rivalry. The sense and point of the illustration are simply in the fact that the child, with ready will and trustful spirit, turned and came at the call of Jesus. Luther's rendering accords with this interpretation: 'dass ihr euch umkehret, und werdet, wie die Kinder,' 'that ye turn yourselves round, and become like children.' There must be the same readiness to hear and turn at the teacher's call, the same absence of self-will, and display of undoubting confidence. This is the only instance in which the verb *strophō*, which occurs 18 times, is rendered 'be converted.' Elsewhere it is rendered 'turn,' as in the passage: 'Turn to him the other also.' There is another <sup>5 Mat. 39</sup> verb *epistrophō*, which is rendered 'turn, return, be converted, come again,' all of which would be embraced by the one rendering 'turn.' If that term were adopted throughout, the sense of the English translation would correspond to that conveyed to the minds of Greek readers, and the extraneous and erroneous ideas which have come to be attached to the expression 'be converted' would of necessity disappear. Jesus proceeded to argue that the qualities which were indispensable at the first submission to divine rulership, were those which would ensure greatness of character and place under the heavenly government. 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little <sup>18 Mat. 4</sup> child, the same is the greatest (Gr. greater) in the kingdom of heaven.'

Mark and Luke omit this portion of the discourse of Jesus. They state only that he 'took a little child: ' as Matthew alone mentions the calling of the child, he only could relate the comments of Jesus which were based upon the incident. But the next saying of Jesus is recorded by all three evangelists. 'And whoso shall receive one <sup>11 5</sup> such little child in my name receiveth me.' Had we only Matthew's narrative, it would be most natural to infer that the word 'such' indicated, not actual children, but disciples who had turned and become as children. But the word 'such' is adopted also by Mark, apart from the idea arising out of Matthew's account. 'Whosoever <sup>9 Mark 37</sup> shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me.' And Luke refers to that particular child. 'Whosoever shall receive <sup>9 Luke 48</sup> this little child in my name receiveth me.' Matthew's record of the conversation stops at this point. Mark adds: 'and whosoever <sup>9 Mark 37</sup> receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me;' which stands in Luke: 'and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent <sup>9 Luke 48</sup> me.' The stress of these remarks lies upon the word 'receive.' How

is it to be understood? Obviously no meaning of it is admissible which will not apply equally to the reception of a child, of Jesus, and of God. Therefore no reference can be intended to the taking care of a child, or to the teaching of one, for in that sense we cannot 'receive' Jesus, much less God. More than 18 Greek words are translated as 'receive.' The word here used is *dechomai*, which occurs 49 times, and is rendered by 'receive, take, accept.' It is thus defined: '*of things*: to take, accept; *of persons*: to receive hospitably, entertain, 2 to receive as an enemy, watch for, 3 to expect, wait for.' In this passage it must denote ready and voluntary acceptance. The expression 'in my name' appears to be equivalent to 'as representing me,' or 'in connection with me,' judging by the following passages. 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' 'For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ.' 'For there is no man which shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me.' 'For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are (Gr. in name that ye are) Christ's, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' 'In my name shall they cast out devils (Gr. demons).' 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.' 'But the Comforter, *even* the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name.'

Luke closes the account of this discourse of Jesus with the additional saying, 'For he that is least (Gr. lesser) among you all, the same is great.' There need be no thought about 'greater' or 'greatest,' for all are 'great' in proportion as they accept Christ and God, and to that dignity the 'lesser' and the 'least' may attain. According to the Authorised Version Matthew alone uses the word 'little' before 'child' and 'children;' but in the Revised Version the word 'little' appears also in the accounts of Mark and Luke. The word is the same in the three gospels, *paidion*, which is rendered sometimes as 'child' and sometimes as 'young child' or 'little child.'

It would seem that the expression used by Jesus, 'in my name,' led to the mention by one of the apostles of the following incident. They had come across a man who was exorcising demons in the name of Jesus; and because he did not associate himself with the apostles, they had taken upon themselves to forbid him the exercise of such a power. 'John said unto him, Master (or, Teacher), we saw one casting out devils (Gr. demons) in thy name: and we forbade him, because he followed not us.' In Luke the present tense of the verb 'follow' may be taken to indicate a persistent determination on the part of the man not to ally himself with the apostles. 'And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils (Gr. demons) in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.' In the Authorised Version Mark and Luke more nearly corresponded; but in the former the Revisers have adopted 'John said unto him,' instead of 'And John answered him, saying;' they have omitted, 'and he followeth not us;' and they have replaced, 'because he followeth not us,' by 'because he followed not us.' All these alterations are made in accordance with the reading of the two oldest MSS. Alford notes that the word rendered 'forbid' is literally 'hinder.' It is obvious that compulsion in some shape was exercised by the apostles. It may have been

18 Mat. 20

24 Mat. 5

9 Mark 39

,, 41

16 Mark 17

14 John 13

,, 26

9 Luke 48

9 Mark 38

9 Luke 49

merely the moral pressure of their expressed and unanimous opinion ; yet the verdict of that self-constituted jury of twelve against one could not easily be set at naught. No doubt they conceived there were ample reasons to justify their interference ; they may have dreaded the injury which might be done to their Master's cause by the unauthorised use of his name. But whatever their reasons, Jesus treated them as of no account. He disapproved of their high-handed proceeding, and desired them to withdraw their prohibition. 'But Jesus said, Forbid him not.' It was not to be apprehended that a man who was able to perform a great deed in the name of Jesus, could easily become transformed into an opponent of his cause : 'for there is no man which shall do a mighty work (Gr. power) in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me.' The Revisers have replaced 'lightly' by 'quickly.' Young renders the word 'readily ;' Luther 'bald,' 'soon.' In the twelve other instances in which the word—*tachu*—occurs, it is rendered 'quickly.' It might be regarded as an axiom that everything done in connection with their cause, short of actual opposition, would help it forward : 'for he that is not against us is for us.' Of the three oldest MSS. the Alexandrine only (which was about a century later than the other two) reads 'you' instead of 'us.' Alford states that many ancient copies read 'you,' and he adds : 'In the divided state of the critical evidence, the reading must be ever doubtful.' In Luke the passage stands in the Authorised Version : 'And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not ; for he that is not against us is for us.' This has been altered by the Revisers to : 'But Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not : for he that is not against you is for you.' The three oldest MSS. have 'against you,' but only the Alexandrine 'for you.'

Luke records no further observation of Jesus. The account of Mark proceeds as follows : 'For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are (Gr. in name that ye are) Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Alford expresses the opinion : 'This verse does not take up the discourse from verse 37, as some think, but is immediately connected with verse 40 : "Even the *smallest* service done in my name shall not be unrewarded—much more should not so great a one as casting out of devils be prohibited."' The least thing done, the simplest act of kindly courtesy to a disciple, in the name of Christ, must needs be acknowledged and rewarded. But, on the other hand, an injury done, an obstacle cast in the way of one who listens to the call of Jesus, and is ready to submit to his guidance and disposal, this is an offence so heinous, and would draw down a punishment so great, that it were better for the offender to be doomed forthwith to death, no matter how ignominious so only it were sure and speedy. 'And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone (Gr. a millstone turned by an ass) were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.' Tischendorf omits the words 'on me' after 'believe,' on the authority of the two oldest MSS.

Matthew omits all mention of the observation of John, and of the reply of Jesus thereto, and in his narrative the solemn warning, the allusion to the millstone and death by drowning, follow immediately after and form a portion of the discourse relating to the little child.



18 Mat. 5, 6

This seems to contradict the idea of Alford that in Mark verse 41 does not refer back to verse 37. The two subjects ran into each other. The child being taken as a pattern, Jesus now speaks of his followers as 'little ones which believe,' and Matthew has recorded his saying without alluding to its precise application. His narrative stands as follows. 'And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone (Gr. a millstone turned by an ass) should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk into the depth of the sea.'

The Revisers have replaced the word 'offend' in the Authorised Version by 'cause to stumble.' The Greek verb is *skandalizō*: 'to make to stumble, give offence or scandal, throw difficulties in one's way.' It is derived from *skandalēthron*, 'the stick or support in a trap.' An examination of all the passages in the New Testament shows that in almost every instance where the word occurs a similar alteration has been made in the Revised Version: 'offence' becomes 'stumblingblock' or 'cause of stumbling,' 'offend' becomes 'stumble,' and 'offended' 'stumbled.' These alterations are by no means unimportant. They enable us to understand what was in the mind of Jesus and his apostles, whereas the words 'offend' and 'offence' were inadequate, and indeed misleading. To 'offend' means to do or say something which is displeasing to another; an 'offence' committed against another signifies a direct injury or wrong done to him; to 'cause another to offend' means to make him do something evil. None of these ideas are connected with the expressions 'stumble, stumblingblock, cause of stumbling, stumbled.' The word 'stumble,' and its derivatives, involves the conception of a person pursuing a certain course who is suddenly checked in a painful, unpleasant, or dangerous manner, an obstacle having been either by accident or design laid in his way. The deliberate placing of such an obstacle in the pathway of a believer in Christ was, in the eyes of Jesus, the most damnable of sins; again and again he utters emphatic warnings against it, denounces the heinousness of the crime, and foretells the grievous punishment which must follow it. That was Jesus' way of pleading for freedom of conscience and of action on behalf of all his followers. Each disciple must be suffered to walk unimpeded in the path of duty, heaven's light around him and Christ's spirit within him sufficing for his safe conduct.

Jesus pursued his train of thought upon the subject. In the nature of things, owing to the imperfect condition of society, stumbling-blocks must at all times exist, bringing woe to those who walk unwarily. 'Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come.' Here the word *skandalon* is first rendered 'occasion of stumbling' and then simply 'occasion.' Young renders: 'Wo to the world from the stumbling-blocks! for there is a necessity that the stumbling-blocks come.' So much the more is the man unpardonable who deliberately casts them in the way of others. 'But woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh;' which is rendered by Young: 'But woe to that man by whom the stumbling-block cometh.'

Some stumbling arises from the perversity of our nature. The members of our own body may play us false: a hand may falter, and



lose its grasp ; a foot may trip, and stop our progress. In such a case, Jesus bids us sacrifice the faulty part for the safety of the whole.

‘And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee.’ The Authorised Version has ‘cut them off,’ but the word ‘it’ in the Revised Version agrees with the two oldest MSS. The hyperbolism of the saying indicates the solemn earnestness of the Speaker. His intensity of conviction called up the strongest figure of speech to emphasise the warning. It was a question of life or death ; and a maimed and halting life was to be preferred to the doom which would irrevocably ensue if, for the sake of saving the faulty limb, the man himself should be precipitated into the consuming fire which is ceaselessly burning throughout all generations. ‘It is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire.’ Young renders, ‘age-during fire.’

Jesus assumed the possibility of the eye itself proving deceptive, and thus a constant source of danger, though all the other members might be efficient and reliable. In such a case there must be no hesitation and no faltering : better sacrifice one eye than run the risk of both becoming defective, and so rushing blindly towards destruction. ‘And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire (Gr. Gehenna of fire).’

In Mark’s narrative these sayings are differently arranged and somewhat amplified. The hand and the foot are not spoken of together, as in Matthew, but a separate paragraph is given to each ; in both of them the word ‘Gehenna’ occurs, where it is not found in Matthew, and in the first of them the ‘eternal fire’ of Matthew is termed ‘unquenchable fire.’ Matthew has, ‘it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye,’ but Mark has, ‘it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye ;’ and Mark contains an expression not found in Matthew : ‘where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.’ ‘And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off : it is good for thee to enter into life maimed ; rather than having thy two hands to go into hell (Gr. Gehenna), into the unquenchable fire. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off : it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell (Gr. Gehenna). And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out : it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell (Gr. Gehenna) ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.’ The Revisers, following the two oldest MSS. and the best ancient authorities, have omitted verses 44 and 46, which were identical with verse 48. They have also omitted from verse 45, on the authority of the two oldest MSS., the expression ‘into the fire that never shall be quenched,’ and also the word ‘fire’ after ‘hell’ in verse 47.

The expressions recorded by Matthew are ‘age-during fire, Gehenna of fire ;’ by Mark (Young’s version), ‘into the Gehenna, into the fire—the unquenchable—where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not quenched.’ We have here the idea of a fire which never ceases burning,—‘age-during ;’ a fire too large and fierce to be extinguished

—‘unquenchable ;’ a fire to which the term ‘Gehenna’ is applicable ; a place of putrefaction and cremation, ‘where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not quenched.’ The term ‘Gehenna’ has no equivalent in modern speech, but it was well understood by the Jews, and conveyed a very definite and expressive meaning. Alford gives the following explanation (on 5 Matt. 22) of the Gehenna of fire, the word ‘Gehenna’ signifying ‘Valley of Hinnom :’ To the S. E. of Jerusalem was a deep and fertile valley, called *the vale of Hinnom*, and rendered *Gehenna*, Joshua xviii. 16, LXX. In this valley (also called Tophet, Isa. xxx. 33 ; Jer. vii. 31) did the idolatrous Jews burn their children to Moloch, and Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 10) therefore polluted it ; and thenceforward it was the place for the casting out and burning all offal, and the corpses of criminals ; and therefore its name “the Gehenna of fire.” Jesus had previously alluded to ‘Gehenna fire’ as the doom of criminals : ‘Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire.’ It is clear, therefore, that the exhortation of Jesus is to be understood as signifying that it is better to undergo anything in the shape of self-sacrifice, for the purpose of following him, than to be misled by what is wrong and evil in our own nature, and find, instead of the life he offers, a death which is as shameful as it is certain. Jesus, in fact, quoted from the following passage of Isaiah, relating to the death and utter destruction of transgressors : ‘And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me : for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.’ As long as the expression ‘hell fire’ stood in the Authorised Version without any reference to its true sense of ‘Gehenna of fire,’ it was not possible for ordinary English readers to ascertain its meaning ; consequently a frightful amount of misconception has arisen in connection with these and similar sayings of Jesus. The same excuse cannot be made for the perverted meaning so generally given to the quotation from Isaiah. Only gross carelessness and want of due thought and examination could transform a passage indicating in the clearest way death and destruction, into an argument in support of the doctrine of endless torment.

Mark records some further sayings of Jesus on the subject. ‘For every one shall be salted with fire.’ Either the word ‘salted’ here must be taken as equivalent to ‘sprinkled,’ so resembling the figure ‘baptized with fire,’ or the saying contains two ideas, not one only ; for no application of fire can be literally a salting. Salt has a virtue which preserves from putrefaction, and fire can be used to burn away what is worthless and injurious. To every one these two things must be applied : the salt must purify and preserve, and the fire must try and purge : ‘for every one shall be salted with fire.’ The Authorised Version adds : ‘and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt,’ but this is now omitted, not being found in the two oldest MSS. Then Jesus intimated that in salt there was a beneficial influence which could be found in nothing else. ‘Salt is good : but if the salt have lost its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it ?’ Jesus urges his disciples to keep their whole nature under the constant influence of this natural preservative : ‘Have salt in yourselves.’ The connection is not obvious between this and the following words : ‘and be at peace one

5 Mat. 22

65 Isa. 24

9 Mark 49

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with another.' Alford notes that this is 'omitted by several ancient authorities ;' the passage, however, is found in the three oldest MSS., and it follows naturally as an exhortation at the close of a discourse which took its rise from a dispute among the disciples as to who was the greatest. They needed a 'salt' of some kind to purify and sweeten their minds and temper.

Jesus reverted to the first topic of his discourse. 'See that ye despise not one of these little ones.' In Young's version this takes the form of a solemn warning : 'Beware ! ye may not despise one of these little ones.' Jesus enforced the exhortation by a very bold and startling argument : 'For I say unto you, that in heaven their angels (messengers—Young) do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Alford believed 'the plain sense of the words' to be 'that to individuals (whether invariably, or under what circumstances of minor detail, we are not informed) certain angels are allotted as their especial attendants and guardians. We know elsewhere from the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament (Ps. xxxiv. 7 ; xci. 13 : Heb. i. 14 al.) that the angels do minister about the children of God : and what should forbid that in this service, a prescribed order and appointed duty should regulate their ministrations ? Nay, is it not certain by analogy that such would be the case ? But this saying of our Lord assures us that such *is* the case, and that those angels whose honour is high before God are entrusted with the charge of the humble and meek,—the children in age and the children in grace.' The conclusion drawn by Alford appears natural and reasonable. Jesus contrasts the possible scorn of men on earth with the care and responsibility of the heavenly guardians, who are allowed close and constant access to the heavenly Father. In the teaching of Jesus we often find him linking together earth and heaven. The same truth of the ministrations of heavenly Beings to mankind, he had alluded to previously : 'Verily, verily, I say to you, henceforth ye shall see the heaven opened, and the messengers of God ascending and descending on the Son of man.' (Young.) The thought of such mysteries of spiritual life and influence should make us humble and charitable. The least esteemed on earth, are watched over and cared for. Yet we must not extend the words of Jesus beyond their proper scope. He is speaking only of 'little ones,' by whom Alford understood 'the children in age and the children in grace.' There are 'men of the world,' strong-minded, self-willed, avaricious, seeking their own ends by fraud or violence, equally ready at defending themselves or attacking others : we can imagine no heavenly messengers ministering to them. Nor does Jesus even say that to all believers in him, nor to any believer at all times, are these 'messengers in the heavens' assigned, but only to the 'little ones.' Nurses and watchers are for the young and feeble, not for adults and those in full health and strength. A marked distinction exists between 'babes' in Christ and 'full grown men, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.' In the case of Jesus himself, we read only of the ministry of angels in moments of weakness and trial, after his temptation in the wilderness and in his agony in the garden of Gethsemane.

The Authorised Version proceeds as follows : 'For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost.' This verse is omitted by



the Revisers; it is not in the two oldest MSS., and Alford notes that it 'is omitted in several of the oldest authorities.' Its connection with what precedes is not at first sight apparent, which may account for its omission under the mistaken idea that it was misplaced. It would seem that the ministry of angels to 'little ones' is meant to be illustrated by the ministry of Jesus to lost ones. He appeals to the judgment of his hearers: 'How think ye?' He assumes a man to have a hundred sheep, and to have lost one of them. Will he not leave the rest of the flock, which he knows to be feeding in safety, and go in search of the lost one? 'If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray?' The Authorised Version has 'goeth into the mountains:' the Revisers have replaced 'into' by 'unto.' In the Sinaitic MSS. the words 'into the mountains' have been erased by a later hand. Alford notes that the words 'leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh,' should be rendered 'leave the ninety and nine on the mountains, and goeth and seeketh.' That agrees with the literal translation in the 'Englishman's Greek New Testament,' which is as follows: '(does he) not, having left the ninety-nine on the mountains, having gone seek that which is gone astray?' That exactly reverses the sense of the Authorised and Revised Versions. Young renders, 'having gone on the mountains,' but Tischendorf, Samuel Sharpe and Luther agree with Alford. Be the search where it may, on the mountains or in the valleys, if it is successful, the owner of the sheep experiences at its recovery a thrill of rejoicing which he could not feel with respect to the possession of the rest of his flock. 'And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray.'

Let us be careful to confine ourselves to the idea which was in the mind of Jesus in delivering the parable. On a later occasion he spoke a similar one, and then he took the ninety-nine sheep as representing so many righteous persons, and the sheep lost and found as a sinner repenting. But here there is no such allusion. The only inference drawn by Jesus from the parable now under consideration, relates to the subject he had previously been speaking of—the watchful care of the heavenly Father over 'little ones.' 'Even so it is not the will of your Father (Gr. a thing willed before your Father) which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.' It is willed before God that the ministry even of angels shall be granted in the crisis of their need. That is the scope of the argument, the interpretation of the parable. Its simplicity is marred, its meaning perverted, when men add to it what Jesus did not even hint at,—the ideas of sin and of repentance.

On that subject Jesus next proceeded to speak, giving counsel as to the right way of dealing with sin in the Christian community. 'And if thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone.' The words 'against thee' are omitted in the two oldest MSS., and the Revisers note that they are omitted by 'some ancient authorities.' The Rev. J. J. Halcombe, in 'Gospel



Difficulties,' remarks as follows: 'In Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament the words "against thee" disappear. That the directions given by our Lord could not be intended to apply to merely personal offences may be argued from the fact that just afterwards it is not only assumed that no directions have been given with reference to such offences, but they are dealt with as we should expect in an entirely different manner.' It is not easy to see the force of such an argument. If Jesus intended to speak only of sins against the community at large, sins which do not directly affect any particular person, why should he have used the word 'thy?' And on whom would the duty fall of reproving the sinner? Only a person in intimate relation with him, one likely to suffer indirectly by his sin, would be sufficiently cognizant of it to undertake the task. The closest connection between the parties is assumed to exist: 'If thy brother sin . . .' Sins which are not 'personal offences' are few and far between. The drunkard may injure himself most, but his sins must needs injure those near and dear to him. It is difficult to conceive how any one could be induced or expected to act as a censor of faults in others which in no way affect himself. I may think my neighbour a gluttonous man, but could do no more than hint courteously about temperance and simplicity of diet. Every man claims the right of personal judgment and freedom. Surely the advice of Jesus, 'Go, and show him his fault between thee and him alone,' applies to matters in which the two persons are mutually interested: a fault has been committed, and it can be most quickly and satisfactorily brought home to the offender by the person who has suffered, or is likely to suffer, from it, and who knows all the circumstances. Alford's view is as follows: 'This direction is only in case of personal offence against ourselves, and then the injured person is to seek private explanation, and that by going to his injurer, not waiting till he comes to apologize.'

We shall best comprehend the idea which was in the mind of Jesus by regarding it in its entirety. 'And if thy brother sin against thee, go shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear *thee* not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church (or, congregation): and if he refuse to hear the church (or, congregation) also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.' Jesus assumes the existence of a community or brotherhood of Christians. One of them wrongs another. What shall the offended person do? He must not yield to a spirit of revenge, must not wipe out an insult or injury by blood, nor in any way retaliate the wrong. Neither would Jesus have brother go to law with brother in order to obtain satisfaction or compel restitution. His followers must adopt a very different method. Let the injured person call his brother aside, discuss the question fully, and demonstrate, from his own point of view, the wrongfulness of the action. If conviction can thereby be brought home to the mind of the offender, the result will be beneficial to both parties. 'If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.' Alford understands the word 'gained' 'in the higher sense—reclaimed—gained for God.'

But minds and wills are differently constituted. A man may fail

to see his own conduct in the same light as his neighbour does ; a perverted judgment may blind the eyes of the offender ; pride or self-interest may forbid any confession or rectification of the wrong done. In such a case, the next step advised by Jesus is that the complaining party should submit the case to one person, or at most to two persons, of course members of the same brotherhood, thereby complying with the spirit of the Mosaic law : ‘ At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established.’ Assuming the cause of complaint to be justified, expostulation to be used by the arbitrators, and the offender still to continue unconvinced or unyielding, a further and more public step is recommended ; ‘ tell it unto the church.’ So it stands in the Authorised Version, with no note of warning against the popular notion that a ‘ church ’ was a kind of ecclesiastical institution comprising bishops, priests, deacons, an organized system of doctrine and worship, and two distinct classes, the priesthood and the laity. Young banishes the word ‘ church,’ using ‘ assembly ’ instead, and the Revisers here give as an alternative rendering ‘ congregation.’ It is not easy to understand why they did not deal in the same way with the only other passage where the term occurs in the gospels : ‘ Upon this rock I will build my church.’ The meaning of the word ‘ congregation ’ or ‘ assembly ’ is clear and unmistakable : it involves the idea of the community of believers. The offended brother was authorised to bring his complaint before the assembled brethren, in order that the general opinion of the congregation might be expressed with respect to the question at issue. But if the offender refused to adopt the view and act upon the advice of the congregation, what was next to be done ? Absolutely nothing. The course prescribed by Jesus was simply this : The injured person was first, in private, to express his own opinion ; one or two others were to be called upon to express theirs ; lastly, the matter was to be debated as one of public import, and the congregation would express their opinion, either unanimously or by a majority. But from first to last there was to be no compulsion, no enforcement of apology or restitution : the arbitrators were not empowered to issue an award, the general assembly could pronounce no binding judgment. Their action could have no further result than this : ‘ Let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.’ Neither, it would seem, did this amount to a sentence of excommunication simply, without any other penalty. Nothing is said about exclusion from the brotherhood, nor is it even hinted that the congregation were to notice the matter further, or in any way manifest their aversion to the wrong-doer. It is merely said, ‘ let him be unto thee ’ (singular, not ‘ unto you,’ plural) ‘ as the Gentile and the publican,’ rendered by Young, ‘ let him be to thee as the heathen man and the tax-gatherer,’ one, that is, with whom thou art at liberty to hold no intercourse and have no dealings, and whose conduct and moral status thou mayest consider degraded.

In the existing customs and constitution of the Christian Church there is nothing answering to this mode of procedure. Dean Alford was constrained to observe : ‘ Nothing could be further from the spirit of our Lord’s command than proceedings in what are oddly enough called “ecclesiastical” courts.’ He defines ‘ the Church (literally assembly)’ as ‘ the congregation of Christians,’ and he adds : ‘ That

19 Deut. 17

16 Mat. 18

it cannot mean the Church as represented by her rulers, appears from vv. 19, 20, where *any* collection of believers is gifted with the power of deciding in such cases.'

The question thus raised is far too important to be dismissed without careful consideration. It is a strange and startling fact that either no attempt has been made, or if made, has succeeded, to introduce into the Christian community the method of discipline here laid down by Jesus. Church synods, general assemblies, convocations, councils, decretals, there have been innumerable; but they have all been radically defective in two points: (1) they have been exclusively clerical, or the clergy have preponderated; (2) they have dealt with far other matters than those about which Jesus counselled the assembling of the church at large. What is there in the teaching of Jesus to justify the assumption that the government of the church should be placed in the hands of one portion of the brotherhood, the clergy as distinct from the laity? And what saying of Jesus can be produced to prove that he entrusted to that one class, call them what you will,—bishops, clergy, ministers, the making of creeds and the power of enforcing their ideas of doctrine and practice? The government of the Church which has prevailed throughout eighteen centuries, has been a thing of human growth, partly the natural outcome of social needs and advancement, partly the unnatural outcome of theological error and spiritual ambition. Think of the claims and the doings of the popes of Rome. Think of the persecutions and martyrdoms of past times. Think of the legal proceedings instituted by bishops with respect to the doctrines of baptism and the Lord's supper. Think of the numberless sects into which believers are divided, all unable or unwilling to find a common bond of union. Is it possible to imagine that such ecclesiastical organizations have grown out of the ideas and precepts enunciated by Jesus Christ? Could anything be conceived more antagonistic to his mind and spirit than the whole course of Church history? His plan of church government has never yet been tried. There has been no approach to the 'congregational' action which he recommended; the clergy have taught, have ruled, have argued, have decided, in the name and as for the behoof of the congregation; yet these spiritual rulers have not dealt with the one and only duty which Jesus laid upon the 'congregation,' that of enquiry into complaints made by one Christian against another Christian. This simple statement of fact involves and implies no charge or reproach against the clergy of our time: it is not they, but the system which is in fault. They are no more responsible than are the laity for the heritage of mistakes and imperfections which has descended to us from our forefathers. It behoves all of us to open our eyes to the errors of the past, and our minds to the pure, simple teaching of Jesus. Before issuing these instructions to his disciples, he must have deeply pondered the question of church government, and have decided that this was its proper direction and the limit of its action. The past is irrevocable. Our duty lies in the present, and our hope in the future. Let us imagine that all Christians, without attempting to alter anything else in their faith or practice, were to resolve to carry out the directions of Jesus in this respect. What would be the results, immediate and remote, of the change? Suppose a dispute to arise between two persons with



respect to some business transaction. Instead of resorting to the ordinary process of law, one of the parties would go to the other prepared to discuss the question thoroughly. That step could scarcely fail to be beneficial to one or both, for many quarrels arise from misapprehensions or hasty judgment, which the mere talking over of the matter might serve to modify or correct. But if no mutual agreement could be arrived at, the person making the complaint would have the right of claiming the good offices of one or two competent fellow Christians. An appointment would be made, at which the whole of the circumstances would be investigated and considered. If the arbitrator or arbitrators should be of opinion that no wrong had been done, or that sufficient reparation was offered, the quarrel could be carried no further. The defendant would be justified, and the plaintiff compelled to drop his claim, both parties being bound to submission by the rules of the Christian brotherhood. If, however, it appeared that the complaint was well founded, and unredressed, the next step would be to summon a general assembly. The whole matter would be thoroughly enquired into before them, and the opinion of the majority accepted as conclusive. If the defendant submitted to their decision, the wrong would be righted, justice satisfied, and Christian unity restored. If, on the contrary, he refused to submit, his character would suffer in the eyes of all the brotherhood, any one of whom, the plaintiff foremost, would then, and not till then, be justified in avoiding him in business and friendly intercourse.

How different would have been the state of Christendom if such a method of dealing with offences had been adopted in the first centuries of the Christian era, and practised up to the present time? Christianity would then have had a power, an authority, an influence which it now lacks; it would have grown into a potent factor for the regeneration of society; and instead of the petty, miserable ritualistic and doctrinal differences which have prevailed among believers, splitting them into sects each claiming the right to utter its own 'shibboleth' in its own way, the church universal would have introduced a true reformation. No single matter involving right or wrong, justice or injustice, would have failed to be brought prominently forward; every social interest would have been duly and deeply pondered, and such ugly problems as those of Communism, Socialism, Disestablishment, would never have arisen; instead of these dark and threatening clouds we should have rejoiced in the perpetual sunlight of a triumphantly-advancing civilisation, and have breathed only the pure atmosphere of Christian love. The recorded opinions of the General Assembly would have had so much greater weight because unbacked by any kind of physical force or legal compulsion; they would have exercised a far greater moral power, influencing and raising the tone of society. The General Assembly would have been a kind of Royal Commission, collecting and sifting evidence, and arriving at an independent and unbiased conclusion; a Christian Court of Appeal, untrammelled by legal technicalities; a Board of Arbitration, lending its good offices for the settlement of all disputes, whether between one individual and another, or between class and class, masters and workmen, with respect to rates of wages, hours of labour, and so forth.



How much the Christian church has lost by practically disregarding the advice of its Founder, will only begin to be understood when his system comes to be adopted, and its benefits realised. In spite of past neglect, it would probably not be more difficult to inaugurate that system now, than in the first days of Christianity. The first step towards it is to understand what the will of our Lord is. Did he really desire and counsel us to adopt such a plan of action? If so, we may be sure it is neither impracticable nor unnecessary. Anticipated difficulties would vanish before earnestness of purpose. Some of the objections which may seem to lie on the threshold of the enterprise it may be well at once to consider and dispose of.

Would men of good judgment be found willing to interfere in the disputes of their neighbours? To this it may be replied, that a readiness to do so would be an acknowledged Christian duty. And it must be remembered that Jesus simply prescribed the principle and course of action, leaving his church free to arrange and modify its details. If it should be found advisable to appoint two arbitrators in each church district, the men and the money would be forthcoming, and the office would doubtless be esteemed a high and honourable one.

Would the opportunity of bringing private quarrels before the public, tend to the increase of such disputes? For a time, that might appear to be the case; but the ultimate and permanent result would be quite the reverse. In many instances, the calm judgment of two independent minds would prove the plaintiff to be in the wrong; in more instances, probably, some simple mode of adjustment would be suggested and acquiesced in: in either of which events the matter would go no further. The saving of expense, and the avoidance of legal technicalities, quibbles and uncertainties, would encourage a preference for the new method of appeal, and the Christian community would pride itself upon the possession of such a mode of cutting short contentions.

Would the higher interests of Christianity suffer by their entanglement with purely secular matters? To this the reply must be clear and emphatic: there is no higher duty than that of Christian unity. The principles of Justice and Love are as important on earth as they are in heaven, and whatever tends to promote them should rank foremost in our esteem as a means of grace and salvation.

How could the General Assembly be constituted? How could the voice of the whole Christian congregation make itself known? How could the entire community decide upon matters merely personal and often trivial? These enquiries are natural and necessary, just as on the institution of any form of representative government it might be asked, How shall the will of the nation make itself known, and its opinion be exercised and expressed with regard to its multitudinous affairs? When the Christian community resolves to carry out our Lord's expressed design, an easy and practical method of doing so will not be far to seek.

The summoning of a General Assembly would have been a comparatively easy thing in the first days of Christianity, when the total number of its adherents amounted to 'about a hundred and twenty,'<sup>1</sup> Acts 15 and even when there were added to them 'about three thousand souls.'<sup>2</sup> ,, 41 But as disciples multiplied, the voice of the whole congregation

could only be ascertained at intervals, and would then find its expression through deliberately chosen representatives. As the varying aspects of the problem presented themselves, the course of procedure would have to be modified accordingly. What has answered for a nation would answer equally well for the church. The practice soon arose of distinguishing churches by their localities : the church which was at Jerusalem, the church of Ephesus, the church of Smyrna, and so on. The word 'congregation' retains the same meaning whether applied to the entire body of believers or to those assembled in a particular place. The first step towards carrying out the plan proposed by Jesus would be to enrol the names of all professed and acknowledged Christians. Every baptized person would be entitled to enrolment, baptism being the only test of membership which was insisted on by the apostles. No doubt attempts would be made by some to substitute participation in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, but an innovation so unauthorised and unscriptural could not be enforced when opposed to the views and feelings of those holding to the plain tenor of apostolic doctrine and practice. The widely different ideas held by Romanists, Ritualists, Low Churchmen and Dissenters with respect to the Lord's supper, would make it impossible to rely upon that ceremony as a bond of union : it has proved the very reverse of that. The elevation of the rite of Baptism from a merely sacerdotal ceremony to one having a practical application to matters of Christian life and duty, would be an immediate gain to the church in two ways.

(1) The anomaly and incongruity attaching to infant baptism would force themselves upon the minds of Christians. Taught to rely upon the ordinance as the necessary and sole test of church membership, men would begin to question its value and appositeness when administered in infancy, and to ask why, for the sake of baptizing infants, a ceremony so solemn and important should be surrounded and degraded by fictions. It is one thing to argue that every child born of Christian parents should be entitled to baptism, just as every Jewish infant is entitled to circumcision ; it is quite another thing to come to the font with an assertion that the unconscious infant is bound to make a promise of obedience and faith through two or more sureties ; to assume that the sureties have the right to answer for the child ; that 'our Lord Jesus Christ' and the 'Almighty, everliving God' will grant special blessings to the child in connection with such suretyship and baptism. Belief in such a method of baptismal regeneration is kept alive by its surrounding atmosphere of shams and fictions : the child must assume responsibilities which it is not old enough to understand ; godfathers and godmothers must present themselves to promise in the child's name an obedience which they themselves may not, some would add cannot, render ; they are told to perform their duty of teaching, or seeing that the child is taught various things, whereas they have not even been asked if they would take that duty upon themselves, and in time to come will most probably deliberately or unavoidably neglect it ; and finally, because after all the fact must be recognised that such a baptism by no means answers to the Scriptural ideal, the child on reaching years of discretion must be presented to the bishop, when another fictitious or semi-fictitious ceremony is performed, that of the laying on of hands. It is to be hoped that the day is not far

distant when members of the Church of England, moved by feelings of love and reverence and truth, will ponder these things and see to their amendment.

(2) As only baptized Christians would be allowed to take part in the General Assembly, or to vote for the election of its members, the certificate of baptism would come to be regarded as an important document, having a practical use and value it never before possessed. And simultaneously with this recognition of the necessity and advantage of baptism, there would be a gradual weakening and falling away of the superstitious notions which have hitherto attached to it. The ceremony would no longer be regarded as having in itself a spiritual, mysterious, supernatural efficacy, dependent upon the use of certain words uttered by a priest, and deemed of such vast importance that no delay should take place in baptizing infants. Probably the majority of Christians have already outgrown the need which was once felt for the assurance given by the Church of England : 'It is certain by God's Word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.' Infant baptism is not sought for that reason, although the force of custom and, it is to be hoped, a reverential regard for an institution countenanced by our Lord, would seem to have relieved the clergy of the duty once urged upon them in the following instructions : 'The Curate of every Parish shall often admonish the people, that they defer not the Baptism of their Children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth, or other Holy-day falling between, unless upon a great and reasonable cause, to be approved by the Curate.' Either our ancestors and their infants were much hardier than ourselves, or the clergy were too terribly in earnest in insisting upon baptism in the church at a period which involved risk to the infant, and must have prevented the mother from being present. Still our babes are taken to the font, although not quite so early. There is no fear of the custom of baptism dying out through indifference ; and when it is found to have a practical bearing upon the Christian career, it will be more prized than at present, and juster and more rational views with respect to it will prevail. It will be regarded as the appointed door of admission to that brotherhood in Christ Jesus which owns him for Saviour, Master, Lord, and is subject to his teaching and guidance, and ruled by his Spirit.

Taking the certificate of baptism as evidence of church membership, the next step would be to choose a certain number of representatives to form the General Assembly. There would be no more difficulty in finding candidates for that office, than for a national parliament. The position would be esteemed high and honourable, and the sense of religious obligation would move Christians to undertake its duties willingly. At first sight, it would seem that there should be one assembly representing the whole church, just as there is one parliament representing the whole nation ; but a little reflection will show that to be impracticable and unnecessary. The universal church is not limited to one nation, and it would not be possible to constitute out of its members scattered throughout the world, speaking all languages and differing widely from each other in habits, thoughts, manners, an assembly capable of dealing with matters of general interest. And even supposing such a council of



Christendom could be formed, it would have no authority, under the scheme of action proposed by Jesus, either to inaugurate a policy, to issue a decree, or to enforce the rectification of abuses. The only power conferred by Jesus on the congregation is that of deliberating and advising. The assemblies would necessarily be numerous. Just as we have one High Court of Judicature holding its sittings simultaneously in many places, each County Court perfect in itself, so each ecclesiastical district would elect and maintain its own assembly. Under such a congregational system, all denominations of Christians could work in harmony. It would be immaterial how many or how few assemblies were organised; it would be a mere question of convenience whether several parishes should combine, or whether each church or chapel should select its own special representatives. Every one of such assemblies would become a centre of light and leading, of counsel and influence. Doubtless various matters relating to the welfare of the community would be delegated to them, and a more wide-spread interest in parochial affairs would be evoked than has been attainable under the present system of Churchwardenship and Poor Law Guardianship. But the chief thing to be kept steadfastly in view must be the hearing of complaints. Not until assemblies of Christians, altogether distinct from law courts, have been constituted for that especial purpose, can the attempt be made to carry out the behests of Jesus in this respect. Where is the man who is willing and able to take the first step towards the practical realisation of this object? The name of that Reformer will be held in everlasting honour. No nobler cause could be undertaken in the name of Jesus, for the advantage of his church, for the regeneration of society. Century after century this counsel of our Lord has been disregarded, overlooked, well nigh, if not utterly, forgotten. Who will set himself to redeem the past neglect? When 'the voice of the Lord' is heard, 'saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' can an Isaiah be found to answer, 'Here am I, send me?'

6 Isa. 8

How to bring about the establishment of an organisation so entirely novel, will be a problem calling for much wisdom of conception and earnestness of effort. Only a few hints can be suggested as to the inauguration of the movement. It will have to be brought home to the minds of Christians that their duty lies in that direction. Some person of approved judgment must start the enterprise. He might distribute widely a simple leaflet, containing the arguments in favour of the adoption of the scheme. Out of those who responded to his appeal, he could select a council of say not less than twelve and not more than twenty-four. Their joint names could be attached to a further appeal, soliciting the signatures of those willing to bind themselves to enter upon no litigation without first seeking to obtain the opinion of one or two arbitrators, and subsequently, if necessary of the General Assembly. Suppose a case of dispute in business. If either the plaintiff or defendant is a member of the new organisation, he will send its leaflet to his opponent, with a printed notice that he has adopted those principles and is willing to submit the case for consideration accordingly. Possibly the invitation might be accepted, and at the same time a new member gained to the cause. If both names have previously been enrolled, the parties will of course be bound to the proposed procedure. The plaintiff could then select an



arbitrator, and the defendant one also, out of the list of members. If that did not lead to an agreement, the arbitrator or arbitrators would notify the council, by whom a jury of say twelve would be summoned as representing the General Assembly. The system would commend itself as being based upon that already in practice ; and the question of non-payment or payment of jurors would be an open one. Probably there would be no difficulty in obtaining unpaid services : it would be esteemed the glory of the Christian church to offer its aid for the adjustment of disputes, and an honourable Christian duty to serve gratuitously. Of course, throughout the proceedings no oath must be administered, for the institution must be in harmony with the injunction of its Founder, 'Swear not at all.'

The first council would be appointed provisionally : the same or other members would be elected annually ; and at the first and subsequent annual meetings the rules could be revised and settled. Any Christian man must be deemed eligible, and no distinction of class or social position recognised.

Probably there would arise great temptations to extend the system beyond its legitimate sphere of action. In some cases, all the time and labour would seem to have been thrown away : either the plaintiff or defendant would decline to submit to the final decision, and litigation might be threatened and resorted to. It would be asked, Why cannot both parties bind themselves to abide by the decree of the Assembly ? On no account must that be allowed. The ordinary mode of arbitration and umpirage is already open to all who choose to avail themselves of it, and an award so given has all the force of a judgment from the Bench. If the dissenting parties can agree to that course, there is no quarrel, no wrong, no 'offence' for the Christian congregation to take cognisance of. The General Assembly must not come into competition with the law of the land ; it can issue no writ ; it can enforce no decree ; it must ever remain simply an assembly of Christians summoned for deliberation and advice, competent to record its opinion, but nothing more. That is the full extent of the powers entrusted to it by Jesus. And this, its apparent weakness, is its true strength. It can rely upon no physical force : so much the greater will be its moral force. There is no more potent factor in social life than the established tone of society, its unwritten code of honour. This fact comes out with startling distinctness where it might be least expected ; nothing is so much dreaded as the loss of social status : better anything, even a duel to the death, than that ! Such has been the judgment and practice of the world. Let Christian thought, feeling, principle, find their expression in the manner counselled by our Lord, and who shall be able to forecast or limit its beneficial working ? Let us adopt the scheme of Jesus, and abide by it, in its integrity ; let it be deemed sacred from human touch as was the ark of God.

The importance of establishing such tribunals of Christian judgment was recognised by the apostle Paul. He regarded it as a scandal, an act of presumption, that one Christian brother should go to law against another without bringing the matter before the congregation. 'Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbour (Gr. the other) go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints ?' 6 i. Cor. 1 He believed and, as appears from what follows, had taught his con-

verts that hereafter the saints would exercise the highest judicial functions. 'Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters (Gr. of the smallest tribunals)? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?' If, the apostle proceeds to argue, such a power of judging appertains to the saints in this world, the very lowest Christians might exercise it. 'If then ye have to judge things pertaining to (Gr. tribunals pertaining to) this life, do ye set (or, set) them to judge who are of no account in the church?' The note of interrogation inserted by the Revisers is not in the Authorised Version. Young renders: 'Then, if ye have judgment, those despised in the assembly—these cause ye to sit.' It is not clear whether the Corinthians are here (1) advised to set up tribunals on which the humblest believer might sit; or (2) upbraided because they selected Christians having least ability; or (3) that having the right of establishing judgment among themselves, they chose to bring their differences before an outside world of unbelievers held in lowest esteem by Christians. It is quite clear, however, that the apostle disapproved of resorting to any legal tribunal outside the assembly, for he proceeds as follows: 'I say *this* to move you to shame. Is it so, that there cannot be *found* among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you (or, a loss to you) that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.' Suppose the advice of Paul to have been followed. The tribunals of believers would have been powerless to enforce any judgment they delivered: the despised sect of Christians would never have been able to insist upon the ratification of a decree delivered from a judgment-seat not legally constituted. The verb *krinō*, which is here rendered *judge*, does not refer to a formal and binding decision; it applies generally to the exercise of private judgment, as in the passages: 'Judge ye what I say.' 10 i. Cor. 15  
11 „ 13 'Judge ye in yourselves: is it seemly . . ?' The apostle did not recommend the usurpation of judicial functions.

Surely it must be the duty of the church to adopt the plan commanded by Jesus and so strenuously advocated by Paul. It is never too late to attempt the performance of neglected duties. 'If the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he* hath not.' The loss which the church has suffered by neglects and mistakes is irreparable as regards the past, but not as regards the future. Apart from the vexed question about the connection of church and state, here is a sphere for argument and effort sufficiently important to throw other interests into the background. Instead of pleading for the perpetuation of what is called an 'established religion,' let Christians set about the establishment of that system of church discipline and government decreed by Christ and insisted on by the apostle of the Gentiles. In that effort all can combine, and become 'churchmen' in the true sense of the word. Our plainest duty, our highest interest, lie in that direction. Jesus has placed before our minds his ideal of the Christian assembly. Although restricted to deliberation and counsel, unbacked by the

civil power, and having no authority to decree obedience, he declares that any judgments it might pronounce would have in heaven the binding power which they might lack on earth ; the decisions of this spiritual Court of Appeal on earthly matters would be registered above and harmonise with the laws of heaven. ‘Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ Young renders : ‘Verily I say to you, Whatever ye may bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heaven, and whatever ye may loose on earth shall have been loosed in the heaven.’ Alford comments as follows : ‘Strictly considered, the binding and loosing belong to the *power of legislation* in the Church . . . in accordance with the Jewish way of using the words *bind* and *loose* for *prohibit* and *allow*. They cannot relate to the *remission and retention of sins*, for though to loose sins certainly appears to mean to *forgive sins*, to *bind sins* for *retaining* them would be altogether without example, and, I may add, would bear no meaning in the interpretation.’ 18 Mat. 18

The gift of discernment, the sagacity of judgment, which Jesus attributed to the assembly of believers, he extended to the smallest possible congregation : if only two were in agreement as to the necessity of something they desired, the divine will would respond to their will. ‘Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.’ The antithesis is between ‘on earth’ and ‘in heaven,’ between the human will and the divine will : earth and heaven, Man and God in harmony. Jesus is not alluding to any personal want or desire : the two believers must have an aspiration in common. They must meet as disciples of Jesus, engaged in a common cause, and agreeing as to what may be asked in their Master’s name. That is clear from what follows. ‘For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’ Whenever Christians assemble for the express purpose of carrying out the will of Jesus, there will be a realisation of his desires and designs. He is the centre round which they unite ; they embody his spirit ; they represent his presence ; he is ‘in the midst of them.’ That seems to be the opinion of Alford, who says : ‘*There am I* must be understood of the presence of the Spirit and Power of Christ.’ .. 19

The mode of dealing with offences which Jesus had prescribed, led the apostle Peter to put to him a question on the subject. ‘Then came Peter, and said unto him, Lord (Sir—Young), how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? until seven times ?’ Forgiveness is not merely verbal and mental, a word uttered by the tongue or a sentiment admitted into the mind : these are but the accompaniments of forgiveness, which is an abstinence from revenge or punishment. Follow the prescribed course of action step by step, and see whether at any step forgiveness is excluded. My brother offends me, sins against me. I tell him his fault between me and him alone. He will not listen. I call in a friend to hear and decide the matter. My brother remains unmoved. I submit it to the assembly. He refuses to hear them. I do no more. I drop the .. 21

subject in dispute. I am free to avoid future intercourse, but I seek no reparation of the wrong, either by taking the law into my own hands, or by resorting to a legal tribunal. That was the scheme of Jesus : from first to last is it not, in word and deed, an embodiment of the spirit of Forgiveness ? Argument, influence, public opinion, all are brought to bear on the offender ; and then, having proved my case, gained my cause, I drop it altogether. Well might Peter come to Jesus with the question, How often is that to be done ? ‘How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ?’ Peter may have overlooked the fact that the plan proposed by Jesus would cut off the opportunity of a repetition of the offence, by justifying the avoidance by the offended party of future intercourse with the offender. Or Peter may have thought that immunity from the consequences of a misdeed might encourage the offender to act in the same way towards another brother : or there might be cases, as between members of the same family, where intercourse must needs continue. Surely a repetition of wrong-doing on one side and of submission on the other, must not go on indefinitely. Should the limit be drawn at the seventh offence ? ‘Until seven times ?’ In the opinion of Jesus : No. If a limit must be drawn, let it be one outside the limits of probability. ‘Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times ; but, Until seventy times seven.’ The Revisers have inserted in the margin : ‘Or, Until seventy times and seven.’ That modification is not found in Tischendorf, Young, Sharpe or Luther. Whether seventy seven or four hundred and ninety times, the number is sufficiently large to convey the idea of a permanent obligation. Jesus illustrated the subject by a parable showing the operation of the law of forgiveness under the new order of things proclaimed as ‘the kingdom of heaven.’ ‘Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would make a reckoning with his servants (Gr. bondservants).’ Young renders literally, instead of ‘a certain king,’ ‘a man a king.’ No sooner was the investigation commenced than one was summoned to his presence who was found to be indebted to an enormous extent. ‘And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.’ According to the note of the Revisers this would be equivalent to two millions four-hundred thousand pounds sterling. No wonder that in face of a sudden, unexpected demand, the debtor was found unable to meet his liability. ‘But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay . . .’ The word ‘wherewith’ has been inserted by the Revisers. The king’s object being to realise the outstanding debt, he commanded a sale of everything belonging to the debtor, who with his wife and children also must be sold into slavery : ‘his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.’ The words ‘and payment to be made’ do not convey the idea of any deficiency, but rather the contrary. Whatever the servant owed he had received, and unless he had dissipated the property, which is not hinted at, it might still all be there, any insufficiency in the trust estate being made up by the sale of the debtor, his family, and his private possessions. But whatever the result of the sale to the king, it was utter ruin to the servant, who, to avert that ruin, humbly entreated for

18 Mat. 22

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delay, assuring the king that if it were granted the whole debt would ultimately be paid. 'The servant (Gr. bondservant) therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.' What justice demanded, mercy relinquished. The miserable condition of the debtor excited the king's compassion : he released the servant and cancelled the debt. 'And the lord of that servant (Gr. bondservant), being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt (Gr. loan).' Such noble generosity, such royal munificence, was more, far more, than the servant had dared to ask or hope. He had dreaded slavery and life-long poverty ; but he left the king's presence free and wealthy. Then, suddenly, this abject suppliant shows himself a tyrant ; this man who dreaded shame and slavery develops into an oppressor of the poor. He sought out one of his fellow-servants who owed him a paltry sum ; he seized him, actually grasping him by the throat, and demanded payment then and there. 'But that servant (Gr. bondservant) went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence : and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest.' The Revisers note that 'the word in the Greek denotes a coin worth about eight pence halfpenny ;' but as the 'denary' seems to have been a day's pay for ordinary labourers, the sum would be equivalent to about fifteen pounds. It was out of the power of the debtor to pay it, but he earnestly entreated for delay, which would enable him to do so. 'So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee.' The Revisers have omitted the word 'all,' following the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. In the former it was found erased by a later hand. The creditor refused to postpone his claim, but carried off the debtor to prison, where he would have to lie until the debt was paid. 'And he would not : but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due.' An act so high-handed and cruel could not escape comment and criticism. The other members of the king's establishment were extremely grieved at the occurrence, and considered it their duty to bring it to the king's knowledge. 'So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.' The matter was not allowed to rest. The offender was summoned a second time to the royal presence, and sternly charged with his base ingratitude and cruelty. 'Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant (Gr. bondservant), I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me : shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee ?' The king now was as strongly moved with indignation as before he had been with compassion. The debt was held to have revived, and the debtor was handed over to 'inquisitors' (Young), until such time as his estate should have realised sufficient to pay off the amount. 'And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.' There is some uncertainty about the word *basanistēs* rendered 'tormentor.' Alford explains it, 'not merely the prison-keepers, but the torturers.' It comes from the verb *basanizō* : 'to rub upon the touch-stone (*basanos*) : to test, make proof of : to convict : put to the torture.' Evidently the allusion is to certain recognised officials,

18 Mat. 26

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who may have been appointed to deal with debtors in the same way as 'Receivers in bankruptcy,' with powers of enquiry and trusteeship as well as of punishment.

18 Mat. 25

The scope and moral of the parable are indicated by Jesus himself. 'So also shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.' In the Authorised Version 'their trespasses' is added; these closing words are now omitted, not being found in the two oldest MSS. The lesson conveyed by Jesus seems to be this: Unless each individual is willing to forgive his brother, there is no possible way of forgiving the enormous unfulfilled obligations of the entire community. 'So also shall my heavenly Father do unto you (the Christian assembly), if ye (the assembly) forgive not every one (individually) his brother from your hearts.' Jesus does not say: So also shall my heavenly Father do unto every one of you, if every one of you forgive not his brother from your hearts.' That would have signified a divine judgment exercised with respect to every offence, not against the offence itself, or the offender himself, but against the person failing to forgive the offender. God's forgiveness of his people is regulated and registered by their exercise of forgiveness among themselves. The measure of human pardon is the measure of divine pardon. We refuse to forgive a sin committed against ourselves: 'so also shall my heavenly Father do unto you.' But is there any special divine interference in such a case? Does the providence of God step down from its throne to exercise retaliation? 'The moral laws of our being exercise themselves through the instrumentality of men.\*' That is the conclusion which experience forces upon the mind of an earnest student of human history and divine government. The teaching of Jesus, when his words come to be duly weighed and pondered, is to the same effect. Divine retributions come upon us through the workings of social life; not always or often upon the individual offender, but upon the congregation of which he is a member. Immunity from retributive suffering stands upon the same level as the exercise of forgiveness; in the Christian community they rise and fall together: when forgiveness prevails, strife and its attendant miseries are minimised; when selfishness and harshness increase, the volume of unhappiness is swelled, the divine law comes into operation: 'so also shall my heavenly Father do unto you.' God's judgments and blessings come to us in the same way: always through laws of nature and human instrumentality. God gives us all things, and we know well the manner of his giving: life through our parents, food through the earth and elements, knowledge through the contact of mind with mind; even so, judgment through sickness and death, forgiveness through social health and Christian life and love. The teaching of Jesus is for his church at large, and only applies to individuals as members of his church. Try to give a personal reading of the parable, and see how many additions, exceptions and qualifications you must make. God has forgiven me an enormous debt. But is the debt in each case equally immense, the same for children, women, men of science, men of the world, and hardened criminals? Can it be said that all have fallen down before God, and entreated with

\* J. A. Froude on "Calvinism."

equal earnestness? Or that any have promised, opportunity being given, to pay in full? Is it a fact that God has already 'begun to reckon with' us? Must not the application of the parable be postponed to some future judgment-day? Yet Jesus gives no hint of that. The difficulties attaching to the usual mode of interpretation increase at every step, and commentators have not scrupled to introduce their own ideas, limitations and corrections. On the words, 'I will pay thee all,' Alford has the following note: 'Luther explains this as the voice of mistaken self-righteousness, which when bitten by the sense of sin and terrified with the idea of punishment, runs hither and thither, seeking help, and imagines it can build up a righteousness before God without having yet any idea that God Himself will help the sinner.' Trench remarks: 'It seems simpler to see in the words nothing more than the exclamations characteristic of the extreme fear and anguish of the moment, which made him ready to promise impossible things, even mountains of gold.' Both Luther and Trench assume that Jesus represents the servant as promising an impossibility; but they seem to forget that it could be no more impossible to pay than to owe such an immense amount. Again: on the words, 'till he should pay all that was due,' which clearly indicate a termination of the imprisonment and a power of repayment, Alford observes: 'The condition following would amount in the case of the sum in the parable to *perpetual* imprisonment. So Chrysostom: "that is, for ever; for he will never repay."' Surely that can be no true interpretation of the parable which thus sets aside the assumptions made in it. What was it designed to illustrate? Not any particular dealing of God with the souls of individuals, but the method of the divine government: for it begins with the words, 'Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto . . .' Taking the parable in connection with the previous directions as to church oversight and admonition, we gain a clue to the plans and purposes of Jesus which explains much that is otherwise mysterious. If Christians are always to forgive to an unlimited extent, will not the strong be left to triumph over the weak, the unscrupulous over the conscientious? No: for Jesus decreed a method of bringing an enlightened Christian public opinion into constant operation. All offences were to be carried to that bar of judgment; no other punishment would be meted out than that attaching to publicity; wrongs revealed, and yet forgiven, would continue to disturb the conscience of the offender: a healthy tone of social intercourse would result; the Christian assembly would stand out in the midst of, yet distinct from, the world, quick to discern between right and wrong, although never seeking to uphold right by might. Law and war would be the concern of the civil power, and the community of Christians would shake off all responsibility of strife and bloodshed.





# INDEX TO QUOTATIONS FROM THE GOSPELS.

*The large Roman figures denote the Chapters. The first column shows the Verse,  
the second column the Series or Part, and the third column the Page.*

## MATTHEW.

I.	III.	V.	VI.	VII.	IX.	X.
1 i. 46	1 i. 30	4 i. 115	4 i. 131	17 i. 148	1 i. 99	11 i. 214
2 46	2 31	5 116	5 132	18 148	2 99	12 214
3 46	3 31	6 116	6 132	19 148	3 100	13 214
4 46	4 31	7 116	7 132	20 148	4	14 214
5 46	5 32	8 117	8 132	21 149	5	15 216
6 46	6	9 117	9 134	22 149	6	16 216
7 47	7 32	10 119	10 134	23 149	7	17 216
8 47	8 33	11 119	11 134	24 149	8 103	18 216
9 47	9 33	12 119	12 134	25 149	9 103	19 216
10 47	10 33	13 121	13 134	26 150	10	20 216
11 47	11 34	14 122	14 135	27 150	11 104	21 218
12 47	12 114	15 122	15	28 150	12 104	22 218
13 47	13 37	16 122	16 136	29 150	13 104	23 218
14 47	14 38	17 122	17 136		14 104	24 218
15 47	15 38	18 122	18 136		15	25 219
16 47	16 38	19 122	19 137		16 105	26 219
17 48	17 39	20 123	20 137	VIII.	17 106	27 219
18 14		21 123	21 137	1 i. 96	18 201	28 219
19 14		22 123	22 137	2 96	19 201	29 220
20 14	IV.	23 125	23 138	3	20 201	30
21 14	1 i. 49	24 125	24 138	4	21 202	31 220
22 14	2 49	25 125	25 138	5 151	22 203	32 220
23 14	3 49	26 125	26 139	6 151	23 204	33 221
24 15	4 50	27 126	27 139	7 151	24	34 221
25 15	5 50	28 126	28 139	8 151	25 205	35 222
	6 50	29 126	29 139	9	26 206	36
	7 50	30 126	30 139	10	27 207	37 222
	8 51	31 126	31 140	11 153	28 207	38 222
II.	9 51	32 127	32 140	12 153	29 207	39 222
1 i. 21	10 52	33 127	33 140	13 153	30 207	40 223
2 21	11 53	34 128	34 142	14 65	31 207	41 223
3 22	12 58	35 128		15 199	32 208	42 224
4 22	13 58	36 128		16 65	33 208	
5 22	14 59	37 128	VII.	17 66	34 208	
6 22	15 59	38 128	1	18 192	35 212	
7 23	16 59	39 128	2 i. 143	19 ii. 82	36 212	XI.
8 23	17 84	40 128	3 143	20 82	37 212	1 i. 227
9 23	18	41 129	4 145	21 82	38 212	2 157
10 23	19 69	42 129	5 145	22 82		3
11 23	20 69	43 129	6 145	23 i. 192		4
12 24	21 69	44 130	7 146	24 192	X.	5
13 24	22 69	45 130	8 146	25 192	1 i. 213	6
14 24	23 113	46 130	9 146	26 193	2	7 158
15 24	24 113	47 130	10 146	27 194	3	8
16 24	25 113	48 131	11 146	28 197	4	9
17 25			12 146	29 197	5 213	10
18 25			13 147	30 197	6 213	11 160
19 25	V.	VI.	14 147	31 197	7 213	12 160
20 25	1 i. 115	1 i. 131	15 147	32 198	8 214	13 160
21 25	2 115	2 131	16 148	33 198	9	14 160
22 25	3 115	3 131		34 198	10 214	15 160
23 25						

[illegible]

XXIII.	XXIV.	XXV.	XXV.	XXVI.	XXVII.	XXVII.
11	12 iii. 8	1 iii. 40	45 iii. 60	40 iii. 183	5 iii. 206	49 iii. 243
12	13 8	2 40	46 61	41 183	6 206	50 244
13 ii. 338	14 11	3 40		42 183	7 207	51 245
14	15 14	4 40	XXVI.	43 183	8 207	52 246
15 339	16 15	5 40		44 183	9 210	53 246
16 339	17 15	6 40	1 iii. 65	45 185	10 210	54 247
17 340	18 15	7 40	2 65	46 186	11 215	55 250
18 340	19 15	8 40	3 65	47 186	12 217	56 250
19 340	20 16	9 40	4 65	48 186	13 217	57 254
20 340	21 16	10 41	5 65	49 187	14 218	58 254
21 340	22 25	11 41	6 ii. 246	50 187	15 220	59 255
22 340	23 26	12 41	7 246	51 190	16 220	60 256
23 340	24 26	13 41	8 247	52 191	17 220	61 256
24 340	25 26	14 41	9 247	53 191	18 220	62 256
25 340	26 26	15 42	10 247	54 192	19 221	63 256
26 341	27 27	16 42	11 247	55 192	20 221	64 257
27 341	28 27	17 42	12 247	56 192	21 221	65 257
28 341	29 27	18 42	13 247	57 197	22 221	66 258
29 341	30 28	19 43	14 iii. 66	58 197	23 222	
30 341	31 29	20 43	15 66	59 197	24 222	
31 341	32 30	21 44	16 66	60 198	25 223	XXVIII.
32 341	33 30	22 44	17 81	61 198	26 223	
33 341	34 30	23 44	18 82	62 198	27 223	1 iii. 258
34 342	35 34	24 44	19 63	63 198	28 223	2 266
35 342	36 34	25 44	20 84	64 199	29 223	3 266
36 343	37 35	26 44	21 87	65 200	30 223	4 266
37 258	38 35	27 44	22 87	66 200	31 227	5 273
38 258	39 35	28 44	23 87	67 201	32 227	6 273
39 258	40 36	29 44	24 206	68 201	33 229	7 273
	41 36	30 45	25 88	69 201	34 229	8 273
	42 37	31 46	26 88	70 202	35 230	9 274
XXIV.	43 39	32 48	27 90	71 202	36 232	10 274
	44 39	33 48	28 90	72 203	37 232	11 276
1 iii. 1	45 39	34 48	29 92	73 203	38 234	12 277
2 1	46 39	35 48	30 177	74 203	39 235	13 277
3 2	47 39	36 48	31 177	75 204	40 235	14 277
4 3	48 39	37 49	32 178		41 235	15 277
5 3	49 39	38 49	33 178	XXVII.	42 236	16 303
6 5	50 39	39 49	34 179		43 235	17 310
7 5	51 39	40 49	35 179	1 iii. 205	44 236	18 311
8 6		41 55	36 179	2 205	45 240	19 311
9 6		42 55	37 180	3 206	46 241	20 317
10 7		43 55	38 180	4 206	47 242	
11 7		44 60	39 180		48 243	

# MARK.

I.	I.	I.	II.	III.	III.	IV.
1 i. 43	21 i. 62	41 i. 97	13 i. 103	2	22 ii. 40	4 i. 167
2 31	22 62	42 97	14 112	3	23 41	5 168
3	23	43 97	15 103	4 i. 110	24 41	6 168
4 30	24	44 97	16 104	5 110	25 25	7 168
5 32	25	45 97	17	6 111	26 41	8 168
6 31	26		18 104	7 113	27 42	9 168
7 34	27 63	II.	19 104	8 113	28 43	10 169
8	28 65		20 105	9 113	29 43	11 169
9 38	29 65	1 i. 99	21	10	30 43	12 170
10 39	30 65	2 99	22	11	31 i. 191	13 171
11 39	31	3 99	23 107	12	32	14 173
12 49	32 65	4 99	24 107	13	33	15 174
13 49	33 65	5	25 108	14 112	34 191	16 175
14 58	34 65	6 100	26 108	15 112	35	17 176
15 60	35 66	7 100	27 109	16		18
16 112	36 66	8 100	28 109	17 112	IV.	19
17 112	37 66	9 101		18		20
18 112	38 66	10 101	III.	19	1 i. 166	21 189
19 112	39 66	11 101		20 ii. 40	2 167	22 189
20	40 96	12 103	1	21 40	3 167	23 190

IV.			VI.		VII.		IX.		X.		XII.		XIII.					
24	i.	190	5	i.	211	17	i.	288	7	i.	263	25	ii.	214	5	ii.	285	29
25		190	6		212	18		288	8		264	26		216	6		286	30
26			7		213	19		288	9		267	27		217	7		286	31
27			8		214	20		288	10		267	28		217	8		286	32
28		180	9		214	21		289	11		268	29		219	9		286	33
29		180	10		215	22		289	12		268	30		219	10		288	34
30		178	11		215	23		289	13		268	31		220	11		288	35
31		178	12		225	24		289	14		270	32		223	12		289	36
32		178	13		225	25		290	15		270	33		224	13		305	37
33		184	14		227	26		290	16		270	34		224	14		308	
34		184	15		227	27		290	17		270	35		227	15		308	
35		191	16		227	28		291	18		271	36		227	16		308	
36		191	17		226	29		291	19		271	37		227	17		308	
37		192	18		226	30		291	20		272	38		227	18		311	
38		192	19		226	31		291	21		272	39		227	19		311	
39		193	20		226	32		293	22		272	40		227	20		312	
40		195	21		226	33		293	23		272	41		228	21		312	
41		194	22		226	34		294	24		272	42		228	22		312	
			23		226	35		294	25		273	43		228	23		312	
			24		226	36		294	26		274	44		229	24		312	
			25		226	37		294	27		274	45		229	25		313	
			26		226				28		274	46		237	26		315	
			27		226				29		275	47		237	27		315	
			28		226				30		278	48		237	28		318	
			29		226				31		278	49		237	29		319	
			30		227				32		278	50		237	30		319	
			31		228				33		304	51		237	31		320	
			32		228				34		308	52		237	32		320	
			33		228				35		308				33		320	
			34		230				36		308				34		320	
			35		230				37		309				35		328	
			36		230				38		310				36		328	
			37		230				39		311				37		328	
			38		230				40		311				38		335	
			39		231				41		311				39		335	
			40		231				42		311				40		335	
			41		232				43		313				41		344	
			42						44						42		344	
			43		232				45		313				43		345	
			44		231				46						44		345	
			45		235				47		313				10		256	
			46		236				48		313				11		260	
			47		237				49		314				12		260	
			48		237				50		314				13		260	
			49		237										14		260	
			50		237										15		274	
			51		239										16		274	
			52		239										17		274	
			53		240										18		279	
			54		240										19		279	
			55		240										20		261	
			56		240										21		261	
															22		262	
															23		262	
															24		263	
															25		264	
															26		273	
															27		280	
															28		280	
															29		281	
															30		281	
															31		281	
															32		281	
															33		282	
															22			
															23			
															24			
															25			
															26			
															27			
															28			
															29			
															30			



XIV.	XIV.	XV.	XV.	XV.	XV.	XVI.
60 iii. 198	72 iii. 203	10 iii. 220	22 iii. 228	34 iii. 241	46 iii. 255	9 iii. 271
61 198		11 221	23 228	35 242	47 256	10 274
62 199	XV.	12 221	24 230	36 243		11 274
63 200	1 iii. 205	13 222	25 230	37 244	XVI.	12 277
64 200	2 215	14 222	26 232	38 245	1 iii. 258	13 288
65 201	3 217	15 223	27 234	39 247	2 259	14 297
66 201	4 217	16 223	28 235	40 250	3 265	15 318
67 201	5 218	17 223	29 235	41 250	4 265	16 318
68 202	6 220	18 223	30 235	42 253	5 272	17 326
69 202	7 220	19 223	31 235	43 253	6 273	18 327
70 203	8 220	20 227	32 235	44 255	7 273	19 333
71 203	9 220	21 227	33 240	45 255	8 273	20 333

LUKE.

I.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.
1 i. 3	53 i. 10	22 i. 18	17 i. 36	27 i. 61	31	40 i. 145
2 3	54 10	21 18	18 18	28 62	32	41 145
3 3	55 10	23 18	19 58	29 62	33 i. 104	42 145
4 4	56 11	24 19	20 58	30 62	34	43
5 4	57 11	25 19	21 37	31 62	35	44 148
6 4	58 11	26 19	22 39	32 62	36 105	45 148
7 4	59 11	27 19	23 46	33 63	37	46 149
8 4	60 11	28 19	24 46	34 63	38	47 149
9 4	61 11	29 19	25 46	35 63	39 106	48 149
10 4	62 11	30 19	26 46	36		49 149
11 4	63 11	31 19	27 46	37		
12 4	64 11	32 19	28 46	38 65	VI.	
13 4	65 11	33 19	29 46	39 65		
14 4	66 12	34 20	30 46	40 65	1 i. 107	VII.
15 5	67 12	35 20	31 46	41 66	2 107	1 i. 151
16 5	68 13	36 20	32 46	42 66	3	2 151
17 5	69 13	37 20	33 46	43 66	4	3 151
18 5	70 13	38 21	34 46	44 66	5	4 151
19 5	71 13	39 21	35 46		6 109	5 151
20 6	72 13	40 28	36 46		7 109	6 151
21 6	73 13	41 28	37 46		8 109	7 152
22 6	74 13	42 28	38 46	V.	9 110	8 152
23 6	75 13	43 28		1 i. 67	10	9 153
24 6	76 13	44 28	IV.	2 67	11 111	10 153
25 6	77 13	45 28		3 67	12 111	11 154
26 6	78 13	46 28		4 67	13 111	12 154
27 6	79 13	47 28	1 i. 49	5 68	14 112	13 154
28 6	80 14	48 29	2 49	6 68	15 112	14 154
29 7		49 29	3 49	7 68	16 112	15 154
30 7		50 29	4 49	8 68	17 113	16 154
31 7		51 29	5 51	9 68	18 114	17 154
32 7	II.	52 30	6 51	10 68	19 114	18 157
33 7	1 i. 15		7 51	11 68	20 118	19 157
34 7	2 15		8 52	12 96	21 118	20 157
35 7	3 15	III.	9 50	13 97	22 119	21 158
36 7	4 15		10 50	14	23	22 158
37 7	5 15	1 i. 30	11 50	15 98	24 118	23 158
38 7	6 15	2 30	12 50	16 99	25 118	24 158
39 9	7 15	3 30	13 53	17 99	26 120	25 159
40 9	8 16	4 31	14 58	18 99	27 130	26 159
41 9	9 16	5 31	15 60	19 99	28 130	27 159
42 9	10 16	6 31	16 60	20	29	28 159
43 9	11 16	7 32	17 60	21 100	30 129	29 159
44 9	12 16	8 33	18 60	22	31 130	30 161
45 9	13 16	9 19	19 60	23	32 130	31 161
46 10	14 16	10 33	20 61	24	33 131	32 161
47 10	15 16	11 33	21 61	25 103	34 131	33 161
48 10	16 16	12 33	22 61	26 103	35 130	34 161
49 10	17 17	13 33	23 61	27 103	36 131	35 161
50 10	18 17	14 33	24 61	28 103	37 143	36 162
51 10	19 17	15 34	25 61	29 103	38 144	37 162
52 10	20 18	16 34	26 61	30 104	39 144	38 162

VII.	IX.	X.	XI.	XII.	XIV.	XVI.
39 i. 162	1 i. 213	7 ii. 85	33 ii. 51	47 ii. 71	16 ii. 153	12 ii. 177
40 162	2	8 85	34 51	48 72	17 153	13 178
41 162	3 214	9 86	35 52	49 i. 221	18 154	14 180
42 162	4 215	10 86	36 52	50 221	19 154	15 180
43 163	5 215	11 86	37 52	51 222	20 154	16 180
44 163	6 225	12 86	38 53	52 222	21 154	17 180
45 163	7 227	13 86	39 53	53 222	22 154	18 180
46 163	8 227	14 86	40 53	54 ii. 74	23 154	19 186
47 163	9 227	15 86	41 53	55 74	24 154	20 186
48 165	10 227	16	42 54	56 74	25 155	21 186
49 165	11 230	17 89	43 54	57 74	26 155	22 186
50 165	12 230	18 89	44 55	58 74	27 155	23 187
	13 230	19 90	45 55	59 75	28 155	24 188
	14 231	20 91	46 55		29 155	25 188
	15 231	21 91	47 56		30 156	26 188
	16 232	22 91	48 57		31 156	27 189
VIII.	17 232	23 93	49 57	XIII.	32 156	28 189
1 i. 165	18 256	24 93	50 57	1 ii. 75	33 156	29 189
2 166	19 256	25 97	51 57	2 76	34 157	30 189
3 166	20 256	26 97	52 58	3 76	35 157	31 189
4 166	21 258	27 97	53 59	4 76		
5 167	22 259	28 97	54 59	5 76		
6 168	23 260	29 98		6 77	XV.	XVII.
7 168	24	30 98		7 77	1 ii. 157	1 ii. 194
8 168	25 261	31 98	XII.	8 77	2 157	2 194
9 169	26	32 98	1 ii. 59	9 77	3 158	3 194
10 169	27 261	33 98	2 i. 219	10 78	4 158	4 194
11 172	28 262	34 98	3 219	11 78	5 158	5 195
12	29 262	35 99	4 219	12 78	6 158	6 195
13	30 262	36 99	5 219	13 79	7 158	7 196
14 175	31 262	37 99	6 220	14 79	8 158	8 196
15 176	32 263	38 100	7 220	15 79	9 159	9 197
16 176	33 263	39 100	8 221	16 80	10 159	10 197
17 189	34 263	40 100	9 221	17 80	11 162	11 198
18 190	35 263	41 101	10 ii. 60	18 i. 179	12 162	12 198
19 191	36 264	42 101	11	19 179	13 163	13 198
20	37 270		12	20 179	14 163	14 198
21 191	38 270		13	21 179	15 163	15 198
22 191	39 271	XI.	14	22 ii. 142	16 163	16 198
23 192	40 271	1 ii. 136	15	23 142	17 163	17 198
24 192	41 271	2 136	16	24 142	18 164	18 198
25 194	42 274	3 137	17	25 142	19 164	19 198
26 196	43 278	4 137	18	26 144	20 164	20 199
27 196	44 278	5 138	19	27 144	21 164	21 199
28 196	45 278	6 138	20	28 144	22 165	22 199
29 196	46 307	7 138	21	29 145	23 165	23 199
30 197	47 308	8 138	22	30 145	24 165	24 199
31 197	48 309	9 139	23	31 146	25 165	25 200
32 197	49 310	10 139	24 i. 139	32 146	26 165	26 200
33 198	50 311	11 139	25 139	33 146	27 166	27 200
34 198	51 ii. 80	12 139	26 139	34 258	28 166	28 200
35 198	52 81	13 139	27	35 258	29 166	29 200
36 198	53 81	14 40	28		30 166	30 200
37 199	54 81	15 40	29 140		31 166	31 200
38 199	55 81	16 40	30		32 166	32 200
39 199	56 81	17 41	31	XIV.		
40 201	57 81	18 41	32 ii. 62	1 ii. 147		
41 201	58 81	19 42	33 62	2 147		
42 201	59 82	20 42	34 62	3 147	XVI.	
43 201	60 82	21 42	35 62	4 148	1 ii. 167	
44 202	61 82	22 42	36 62	5 148	2 172	
45 202	62 83	23	37 62	6 148	3 173	
46 202		24 49	38 64	7 148	4 173	
47 202		25 49	39 64	8 148	5 173	
48		26 49	40 64	9 149	6 173	
49 204	X.	27 49	41 64	10 149	7 173	XVIII.
50 204	1 ii. 84	28 50	42 65	11 150	8 174	1 ii. 201
51	2 84	29 47	43 70	12 151	9 175	2 201
52	3 84	30 47	44 70	13 151	10 176	3 201
53 204	4 85	31 48	45 70	14 151	11 177	4 201
54 205	5 85	32 48	46 70	15 153		5 201
55 205	6 85					6 201

XVIII.	XIX.	XX.	XXI.	XXII.	XXIII.	XXIV.
7 ii. 202	13 ii. 242	14 ii. 286	16 iii. 8	27 iii. 126	4 iii. 218	1 iii. 259
8 202	14 242	15 286	17 8	28 126	5 218	2 266
9 203	15 243	16 286	18 8	29 126	6 218	3 273
10 204	16 243	17 287	19 8	30 126	7 218	4 273
11 204	17 243	18 287	20 14	31 127	8 218	5 273
12 204	18 243	19 289	21 15	32 128	9 219	6 273
13 204	19 243	20 305	22 16	33 128	10 219	7 273
14 204	20 243	21 308	23 16	34 128	11 219	8 273
15 206	21 243	22 308	24 16	35 130	12 219	9 273
16 206	22 244	23 308	25 28	36 130	13 219	10 274
17 206	23 244	24 308	26 28	37 132	14 219	11 275
18 211	24 244	25 308	27 28	38 133	15 219	12 275
19 211	25 244	26 311	28 30	39 179	16 219	13 277
20 212	26 244	27 311	29 30	40 179	17 219	14 277
21 213	27 245	28 311	30 30	41 180	18 222	15 277
22 213	28 250	29 312	31 30	42 180	19 222	16 277
23 213	29 251	30 312	32 43	43 184	20 222	17 278
24 213	30 251	31 312	33 34	44 184	21 222	18 278
25 214	31 251	32 312	34 36	45 185	22 222	19 278
26 216	32 252	33 312	35 36	46 185	23 222	20 278
27 217	33 252	34 313	36 37	47 186	24 223	21 278
28 217	34 252	35 313	37 65	48 187	25 223	22 278
29 219	35 252	36 313	38 65	49 190	26 227	23 278
30 36	36 254	37 315		50 190	27 228	24 279
31 224	37 256	38 315		51 192	28 228	25 279
32 224	38 256	39 318	XXII.	52 192	29 228	26 279
33 224	39 257	40 318		53 192	30 228	27 279
34 224	40 257	41 328	1 iii. 65	54 193	31 228	28 282
35 230	41 257	42 328	2 66	55 197	32 228	29 282
36 235	42 257	43 328	3 66	56 202	33 229	30 282
37 235	43 257	44 328	4 66	57 202	34 230	31 284
38 235	44 257	45 334	5 66	58 203	35 235	32 288
39 235	45 274	46 334	6 66	59 203	36 236	33 288
40 236	46 274	47 334	7 81	60 203	37 236	34 288
41 236	47 279		8 81	61 204	38 232	35 288
42 236	48 279		9 81	62 204	39 236	36 289
43 236		XXI.	10 81	63 201	40 236	37 289
			11 82	64 201	41 236	38 289
			12 84	65 201	42 236	39 289
			13 84	66 197	43 239	40 289
			14 84	67 199	44 241	41 290
			15 84	68 199	45 245	42 291
			16 84	69 199	46 244	43 291
			17 85	70 199	47 248	44 301
			18 85	71 200	48 249	45 301
			19 89		49 249	46 301
			20 91		50 254	47 301
			21 124		51 254	48 302
			22 124	XXIII.	52 254	49 302
			23 124		53 255	50 303
			24 126	1 iii. 205	54 256	51 303
			25 126	2 215	55 256	52 303
			26 126	3 215	56 256	53 303

XIX.

XX.

XXI.

XXII.

XXIII.

JOHN.

I.	I.	I.	I.	I.	II.	II.
1 i. 1	13 i. 41	25 i. 34	37 i. 43	49 i. 45	5 i. 55	17 ii. 276
2 2	14 41	26 34	38 43	50 46	6 56	18 276
3 2	15 42	27 34	39 43	51 46	7 56	19 276
4 2	16 42	28 37	40 44		8 56	20 276
5 2	17 42	29 37	41 44		9 56	21 276
6 13	18 43	30 37	42 44		10 56	22 276
7 13	19 34	31 37	43 44	II.	11 57	23 279
8 13	20 34	32 39	44 44		12 58	24 279
9 13	21 34	33 39	45 44	1 i. 55	13 ii. 274	25 280
10 40	22 34	34 39	46 45	2 55	14 274	
11 40	23 34	35 43	47 45	3 55	15 274	
12 40	24 34	36 43	48 45	4 55	16 274	







## INDEX TO VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

---

- Age-during, I. 89, 251, 313; II. 15, 31, 122, 128, 212, 273; III. 172  
 Almsgiving, II. 344—354  
 Angels, I. 8, 183, 264, 315; II. 313; III. 50—55  
 Apostles, I. 112, 216  
 Arnold, Matthew, II. 110, 119, 135  
 Articles of Religion, II. 58  
 Athanasian Creed, I. 155, 221; III. 167  
 Baptism, I. 32, 273, 322; II. 18, 207; III. 313—315  
 Blasphemy, II. 43; III. 249  
 Church, I. 187, 257, 316—327; II. 230  
 Coming, III. 32, 33, 36, 47  
 Common Tradition, I. 106, 114, 167, 172, 241, 277, 301; II. 282, 289  
 Confirmation, II. 208  
 Demons, I. 63, 182, 200, 273; II. 49, 90  
 Disciples, I. 121, 129, 260; II. 62, 83, 117, 156, 167—172, 176, 179, 215, 231, 271, 296, 307; II. 311, 336—338; III. 6, 7, 49, 56—64, 68, 121, 150, 300, 312, 317, 321—326  
 Emulation, II. 205  
 Faith, I. 203, 207, 211, 274; II. 195  
 Fasting, I. 105  
 Forgiveness, I. 100—102, 134, 135, 163, 328—330; II. 44, 264; III. 292—294  
 Gehenna, I. 220, 313; II. 339  
 Glory, III. 280  
 God, I. 75, 155, 156; II. 316  
 Hell. *See* Gehenna.  
 Holy, I. 8, 40; II. 91  
 Holy Spirit, II. 8, 12, 91, 140, 328, 330; III. 13, 141, 143, 291  
 In my name, I. 310, 327; III. 4, 163, 313  
 Inspiration, I. 3, 12, 53, 56, 78, 232, 237, 281, 308; II. 240, 321, 330—334  
 Jehovah, II. 324—327  
 Jews, II. 3, 106—111, 250, 278  
 Last day, I. 247, 251; II. 127  
 Lord's Prayer, III. 78  
 Lord's Supper, I. 225, 252; III. 81—116  
 Miracles, I. 56—58, 193—195, 233, 239, 274, 297, 306; II. 236, 261; III. 298, 326  
 Mother of Jesus, I. 17, 209; II. 1, 50  
 Only-begotten, I. 42; II. 17  
 Parables, II. 160—162; III. 42  
 Political Economy, II. 65—72  
 Politics, III. 257  
 Prayer, I. 133; II. 55, 137—139, 263  
 III. 17—25  
 Preaching, II. 37, 56, 101, 348—352  
 Prophecies, I. 26, 66  
 Repentance, III. 302  
 Resurrection, I. 91; II. 127, 133, 151, 191, 277, 312—318; III. 8—10, 247  
 Revisers, I. 35  
 Righteousness, II. 300—305; III. 159  
 Sabbath, III. 261—265  
 Salvation, I. 174; II. 145, 223; III. 11, 58, 182, 254, 295, 319—326  
 Salvation Army, II. 256; III. 315  
 Scripture-reading, II. 34  
 Son of God, I. 40, 246, 255; II. 330; III. 249  
 Son of man, I. 101, 109, 120, 161, 218, 255; II. 64  
 Spirit, III. 140  
 Spiritual body, III. 285  
 Temptation, I. 49  
 Tongues, III. 327—332  
 Trinity, III. 167  
 Vengeance, II. 202  
 War, II. 272, 298, 305  
 Word, I. 1, 42  
 World, III. 3  
 Yoke, II. 94—96



# INDEX TO PARABLES.

	PAGE		PAGE
Marriage and fasting . . . .	I. 104	The wounded traveller . . . .	II. 98
Old and new cloth . . . .	105	Door, shepherd, sheep, thieves, and robbers . . . .	114
Wine and bottles . . . .	106	Shepherd and hireling . . . .	116
Old and new wine . . . .	106	The friends and the traveller . .	138
City on a hill . . . .	122	The narrow door . . . .	143
Blind guides of the blind . . .	144	Seekers of chief seats . . . .	148
Good and bad trees . . . .	148	The great supper . . . .	153
„ „ treasure . . . .	148	The builder of a tower . . . .	155
Wise and foolish builders . . .	149	The king going to war . . . .	156
Two debtors . . . .	162	Savourless salt . . . .	I. 121
The sower and the seed . . . .	167		II. 157
Good and bad seed . . . .	177	The lost sheep . . . .	II. 158
Mustard seed . . . .	178	„ „ coin . . . .	158
Leaven . . . .	179	The father and his sons . . . .	162
Growing seed . . . .	180	The rich man and his steward . .	172
Hidden treasure . . . .	185	„ „ Lazarus . . . .	186
Merchant seeking pearls . . . .	186	The servant and his master . . .	197
Drag-net . . . .	187	The unjust judge . . . .	201
Lamp under a bushel . . . .	122, 189	The Pharisee and the publican . .	205
Householder and his treasures . .	190	The camel and the needle's eye . .	214
Shepherdless sheep . . . .	212	The householder and the labourers . . . .	220
Harvest and labourers . . . .	212	The cup and the baptism . . . .	227
Children and dogs . . . .	290	The nobleman and his king- dom . . . .	242
Leaven of Pharisees and Herod . .	300	The withered fig-tree . . . .	260
Lost sheep . . . .	316	The two sons . . . .	283
Two debtors . . . .	328	The vineyard and the hus- bandmen . . . .	284
Divided kingdom, city or house . .	II. 41	The royal marriage . . . .	292
The lighted lamp . . . .	51	Gnat and camel . . . .	340
The rich fool . . . .	61	The budding trees . . . .	III. 30
Servants watching . . . .	62	The watchman . . . .	37
Unwatchful householder . . . .	64	The ten virgins . . . .	40
The faithful steward . . . .	65	The talents . . . .	42
The unfaithful servant . . . .	70	The sheep and the goats . . . .	48
Cloud and wind . . . .	74	Vine, husbandman and branches . . . .	148
The slaughtered Galileans . . . .	75	The green tree and the dry . . .	228
The tower in Siloam . . . .	76		
The barren fig tree . . . .	77		
The dead . . . .	82		
The ploughman . . . .	83		
Harvest labourers . . . .	84		





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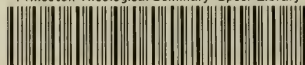
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